IN THE HOLLOW OF HIS HAND

Ralph Waldo Trine

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Ralph Waldo Trine

IN THE HOLLOW *of* HIS HAND

RALPH WALDO TRINE

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By Ralph Waldo Trine

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FOREWORD

Men and women the world over, in these days of independent searching thought and of tremendous readjustments, are longing for the essentials of a religion that relates itself intimately and effectively to the problems and to the affairs of every-day life. The desire in all human problems and relations *to know* that underneath are the Everlasting Arms, is well-nigh universal.

It is indeed a *world crisis* that we are in along many lines of thought and of human activity. In addition to the on-sweeping Democracy in this readjustment time, there is in the realm of religion of Christendom a casting off of many things that through the avenues of myth, tradition, speculation, and "authority" found their way into our present system of organized Christianity—some with their roots running back even to pre-historic times—and all formulated for us by pre-mediæval minds, on pre-mediæval knowledge.

Through a wonderfully enlarged knowledge of early beginnings, ecclesiastical and dogmatic Christianity that has failed and at times so pitiably failed to relate itself to the crying

needs of every-day life, is being thrust into the background by great hosts of earnest and God-aspiring men and women. Freed from the bias of traditional speculations *about the Christ*, and likewise from the bias of " authority," they are finding that the teachings *of the Christ* formulate a religion, and cast into the simplest of terms, if we do not persist in complexing it, that constitutes a veritable moulding force in all the affairs of the daily life, and an effective guiding force in connection with all *human relations.*

Great and rapidly-increasing numbers in our own and in other countries, who are through with the old ecclesiasticism of authority with its dogmas of the inherent sinfulness and degradation of man, whose soul it is the business of religion to save by some un-understood atoning force, with its emphasis on the negatives of life, which induce always fear and lack of faith and therefore crippled energies for mind, body, and spirit, are realising and realising keenly the *great loss* they have sustained through the old emphasis in religion. They are now finding that to know God, whom the Christ revealed, gives a religion of a joyous, conquering power by virtue of the Divine powers and forces, eternally latent within, springing forward into a useful and ever-growing activity.

The Divinity of human nature with its illimitable possibilities and powers that Jesus exemplified, and unfolded, and taught, is, they are finding, a radically different thing from the bewildering and enervating series of speculations about him upon which our organized Christianity was built and which remains substantially its basis to-day. In their passing from the old emphasis to the new, they have exchanged the fears and forebodings that were essential concomitants of their former sense of degradation and weakness, for faith and hope and courage—the natural attendants of the Divine self-realization that Jesus so insistently taught; they have exchanged weakness and impotence for a renewed vigor of mind, body, and spirit; they have exchanged fear and even a dread of the future, for a sustaining peace that makes the present complete, and that going on before brings back assurance of what the future shall be.

The spirit of the Christ is moving in a wonderful manner in the minds and the hearts of men at this present time. Dissatisfied with the barrenness and the inadequacy of what they have been taught as religion in its bearings upon the actual problems and activities of life, they are no longer afraid to think, to question, to investigate, and to exchange half-truths for the newer, fuller truths that the

Divine urge makes essential in connection with all effective and satisfactory living.

Science and a vastly enlarged knowledge over those of centuries ago, brings us word that back of the universe, sustaining and continually building in the universe, and in this our world, are God's eternal and unchangeable laws in all their varied forms. To search out, to know, and intelligently to work in conjunction with them, is to work always along the lines of effectual accomplishment. The "supernatural," the "miraculous," even the "inscrutable ways of Providence," as such, disappear before an enlarged knowledge. They were resorted to by earlier men by way of explanations, because they knew no better, though strange to say in religion we still follow their guidance and accept their conclusions—some, in fact many do, even yet.

Back of and working continually in and through the human will is the Divine will. God is spirit, said the Christ—not a spirit, which is now known to be a faulty translation of the Greek—but God is spirit. God is that spirit of Infinite Life and Power that is back of all, working in and through all, the essential life and force in all. To realise the essential oneness of our lives with this Spirit of all Life and all Power, to think and to act always from

this conscious Centre, is to grow in the realisation and in the appropriation of an ever-greatening degree of Divine guidance and power. *To know God whom the Christ revealed,* is to come into an ever-enlarging knowledge of the Divine laws and forces that are at work in our lives and in the universe about us.

We can find no evidence that is at all trustworthy, certainly no evidence from any of Jesus' own words or teachings, that any unusual powers that he exercised were not in accordance with God's established laws. There *is* evidence pointing to the fact that he had a comprehension of laws vastly superior to those of his time.

To increase the knowledge of men as to their higher possibilities and powers by revealing to them their true identity in the life of God, seemed to be his continual effort. "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." His realisation of the oneness of his life with the life of God—with the Father as he chose to put it—was so natural and so complete that he stands supremely among all teachers as the revealer of God to man—veritably the Way,

the Truth, and the Life. "Believest thou not," he said, "that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very work's sake." And continuing *immediately* he said: "He that believeth on me the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do." If the Christ actually meant what he said, the sooner we act upon his own teachings the better for us, if we actually believe in him as a teacher and a revealer of the highest truth.

If we are lovers of the life, the spirit, and the teachings of the Christ, we become doers of the word and not hearers only; and if we become doers, then through the natural operation of the laws that he enunciated we enter upon a life of far more joyous and effective activities. If we substitute or permit, through ignorance or through weakness, to be substituted for us, an organization, a book, or any one or all of the almost innumerable theological speculations of Ecclesiasticism about the Christ, the result is confusion, uncertainty, dissension, many times disaster.

The age, whatever we may hear said, is not irreligious. It is supremely, we might almost

say, interested in religion. There never has been, perhaps, a greater desire, or rather a more universal desire, to live life from its *Centre,* and to build and to rule one's world from that Centre. But the intelligence of the age is demanding a complete and thorough separation of the wheat from the chaff. It is demanding that ancient groups of men's theorizings about the Christ and theorizings about God and man that are distinctly contrary to the teachings of the Christ, be now pushed into the background, that the teachings of the Christ in connection with a more joyous and a more effective way of living, and in connection with the lifting up and the actual Christianizing of all human relations, may assume the ascendency. The call, nay the demand of the times, is insistent and is becoming well-nigh universal.

The very purpose of Christianity is changing —it is changing from an agency whose reason for being and whose purpose has been primarily to save men's souls from hell, real or mythical or both, to an agency whose reason for being and whose purpose is to inspire and to direct men so that their lives do not here get into a state of hell. In other words, it is no longer regarded by thinking and knowing men and women as a mere creeping-through agency, but as a constructive and building

force in their daily lives. They are also firm in their conviction, through their knowledge of the workings of the elemental law of Cause and Effect, that the one who knows God here and gives evidence that he knows him by an upright, manly, loving, serviceable mode of living, will be known by God both here and hereafter. They are also sustained in their conviction because this is the essential teaching of the Christ, who has led them into the knowledge of the Way, and who traversed it before he taught it. With such a one, receiving directly from the Master a knowledge of the great spiritual verities of life, and whose constant prayer is—Uphold me, O God, by Thy free Spirit—"the hitting of a sawdust trail" becomes a most immaterial matter.

Christianity at the present time is being judged throughout the world, and will be judged for some years in the future, not by its beliefs, but by its works. Men will be drawn to it in overwhelming numbers and will give it allegiance, when it has sufficient value, *in use*, to give to them.

Any agency, any book that can help constructively to point the way to the end that a more simple, a more vital, and a more reasonable religion may take form in the lives of earnest, forward-looking men and women to-

day, is serving no ill-purpose—there is a likelihood indeed of its filling a very wide and genuine want.

Sunnybrae Farm, R. W. T.
Croton-on-the-Hudson, N. Y.,
September 1, 1915.

IN THE HOLLOW OF HIS HAND

I

THINGS AS THEY ARE AND THE TEMPER OF OUR TIME

That there is an inspiration and a power in the Christianism of the Christ, infinitely beyond the tenets of our prevailing organised Christianity, is becoming the priceless possession of great multitudes of men and women to-day. Many have suspected and they are now convinced that the emphasis given by the early Fathers and the Councils of pre-mediæval times, in their almost infinite theories and speculations *about* the Christ, have produced a barrenness in Christianity that must now be replaced by a study into and a far greater appropriation of the teachings *of* the Christ.

That great multitudes of clear-thinking and God-aspiring men and women of the present time, since the element of fear and that of the

taboo have both lost their hold, are tired of and will have nothing further to do with the old *emphasis,* is evident on every hand. They are not only longing to know, but are *demanding* to know, the truth, and all signs are indicating that they are finding it. A sickly obscurantism that has in the past made so many satisfied with the un-understood, has a place no longer in their lives. Not to know the great floods of light that many fields of investigation during the past few years have thrown upon early beginnings, is regarded now as no mark of Christian obedience or loyalty, but rather as a mark of moral cowardice, if indeed it is not that of downright stupidity.

No one in the world's history has ever spoken more strongly perhaps against the dead formulations of an established ecclesiastical order, whose activities were expended in preserving the authority of the past, instead of leading men to an ever-increasing knowledge of God's life in the soul, of God's laws, and of the forces through which they are continually working, than did the Christ. No one, moreover, we may be sure, would speak more strongly against the same agencies among us that would keep the Divine vision, and voice and guidance, away from the active, throbbing life of the present. Little less might we expect from him who said: And ye shall

know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. And again: I am come that ye might have life and that ye might have it more abundantly.

We do not now hesitate to point to certain weaknesses of Christianity. Millions of men and women are now realising its weaknesses. The stupendous and thoroughly unchristian world's war among Christian nations has aided in that. The work of all real and forward-looking Christian men and women is now to find the way out.

A tremendous sifting process is now on, and men and women are everywhere engaged in separating the essential from the unessential, the valuable and the usable from the inconsequential. They are believing and are finding that religion, and above all the religion of the Christ, is something that relates itself intimately and fundamentally to the minutest affairs of the daily life. They are finding that it contains an inspiration and a force that can be appropriated and that can be infused into and made to mould the every-day conditions of life—not something to be accepted on authority as something to be believed about its Founder.

It is no longer, to flee the wrath to come. It is to lift up and to make fit, useful, and valuable, the life that now is, which will lead

naturally and in accordance with Divine laws to the life to come. Its emphasis is on faith in the Divine Life and Power that will lead us, and will impart to us the light and the energy to travel more and more unto the perfect day.

The old emphasis was on faith, first, we might almost say, in our inherent sinfulness and degradation, brought about by the mythical sinfulness and degradation by those thousands of years, but as science has now demonstrated, millions of years, before our time. Second, faith in some un-understood atoning method—administered through a close corporation—to save us from the results of these sins of others, that God—as a monster—saw fit to inflict upon us. Only those in whom the force of superstition and fear still works, or on whom the voodoo can still be used, or those who through these agencies can still be worked for money, or who through the plea of Christian loyalty can be prevailed upon to help preserve the "faith once delivered,"—these combined with that great company of those who haven't thought much about it, who haven't taken the trouble to acquaint themselves with early beginnings, and with present-day findings regarding them, are longer giving allegiance to the old emphasis.

The "faith once delivered," we are now find-

ing, had nothing to do with the teachings of Christ that had to do primarily with the every-day life. As finally formulated in the various Council proceedings and creed-making bodies, they were not even the expressions of the consensus of opinion, and therefore of a unanimity of belief relative to the Christ. They were the *points of difference* that, in their almost infinite speculations *about* the Christ, they were finally able to bind together and come out of their various wrangles with. Many of these Council meetings of the early Fathers, and still more, many of the early Church Councils, were marked by intrigue, treachery, a scheming for preference and for power, the very antithesis of the Christ's own teachings, as can be learned by any one who is interested sufficiently to acquaint himself with untouched accounts of the proceedings.

It was at the time that Christianity was annexed by Rome, and beginning with the formation of the Nicene Creed in 325, when in attempting to formulate it, she began to weave into it many of her intricate systems of metaphysical speculations, and many of her pagan rites, and imposed upon it, that it might awe and attract the populace, many of her state forms and ceremonials and equipments, that the emphasis was shifted from the teachings of Jesus in their relation to life,

to something that must be believed about him by authority of the Councils and later of the Church.

A new time at last has appeared, and out of this bewildering and befogging mass of early theories and speculations about the Christ, there is coming a religion of an immensely greater vitality and power, as is gained from an intelligent study and appropriation of the fundamental truths that were so simply and so clearly taught by the Christ from those clear Judæan hills so many years ago. It is therefore no longer a belief or a reverence of any statement about Jesus, or a belief in Jesus, that constitutes a force for righteous, unselfish, and therefore successful living. Any one of the most ordinary intelligence believes in Jesus. It is the comprehension and the using of the simple but fundamental laws of living that he perceived, lived, and set forth, that constitutes the mightiest driving force in life that we yet know.

The almost startling fact of the essential oneness of the human with the Divine, was the realisation and the teaching of Jesus. That the Divine works in and through the human in the degree that we are able in our own lives to realise it as the Source of our strength, and the Essence of our lives, and to give allegiance and therefore potency to no other power—

such is the revelation and the message that distinguishes him as a teacher above all others.

Renan in his "Life of Jesus" has so truly said: "The highest consciousness of God that ever existed in the breast of humanity was that of Jesus." As was said some years ago by one of the most highly illumined preachers and writers that our country has known*: "The central point of our existence is divine, and God is incarnated in the whole of humanity, but men have not known this and perceived it, as did Jesus of Nazareth. With him it was not a theory, a speculation, an hypothesis, but an intense consciousness, a living verity and reality. From this divine depth of his being, he spake and acted, oftentimes losing sight of the human element in his complex nature, and he stood forth before the people as the God-Man and the Man-God. . . . Consciously united to God, the Central Life, and with all the powers of universal nature, what could he not accomplish?"

And said that great German philosopher Fichte: "An insight into the absolute unity of the human existence with the Divine is certainly the profoundest knowledge that man can obtain. Before Jesus, this knowledge had nowhere existed; and since his time, we may say down even to the present day, it has been

* Dr. Warren Felt Evans, in "Soul and Body."

again as good as routed out and lost, at least in profane literature." And again: "God enters into us in his actual, true, and immediate life,—or, to express it more strictly, we ourselves are this, his immediate Life."

Expressed in perhaps somewhat different terms, it is likewise the *essential basis* of all modern idealistic philosophy.*

Nowhere can we find from Jesus' own teachings that he claimed for himself anything that he claimed not for all mankind. Nor could it be otherwise if God is God and Law is Law. There is, of course, a difference—but it is a difference in capacity of realisation, and as to how fully one, in his inner consciousness and in the whole outward expression of his life, is capable of trusting, and *through his love and his will,* is ready to trust himself to the Divine Law. Completely and with all humility, Jesus did this. A sense of dependence upon the Divine guidance and power gives that appropriate humility which is always combined in

* It is likewise the basis—this recovery of the essential content of Jesus' revelation and mission—of the widespread New-thought movement, which originated some few years ago in America and which is spreading all over the world, with an enormous and a rapidly increasing number of adherents. It is likewise the *essential basis* of the Christian Science movement, whose centres and whose churches are likewise growing with marked bounds throughout the world.

those of real wisdom and power. It is a part of their life; it is indeed a part of their power.

In all his thought and in all his acts Jesus gave allegiance and acknowledgment to this guidance and power—Of myself I can do nothing; it is the Father that worketh in me. "Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God." "Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in Heaven." Said a noted English minister in a Glasgow pulpit within the last month: "Strangest of all religious paradoxes, surely, is this, that he who succeeded in revealing God most clearly unto men, should have been made by the men to whom he revealed him the means of his most effective eclipse!"

One of the great forces in constructive philosophy and religion of to-day, Rudolf Eucken, has recently published, "Can We Still Be Christians?" His reply in substance is that we not only can but we must be if we would actualise the highest in life and in civilisation. It must, however, be not the Christianity of the creeds and the dogmas of the past; it must be the Christianity of the Galilean Christ, in its constructive relation to individual, social, national, and international life.

Through this new emphasis a new Christianity is now being born. It is breaking into our churches from the outside. Forward-look-

ing men in our churches are preaching it from the inside with a power and a persuasiveness that is showing them to be prophets instead of merely priests. They are no longer bound by the theory that the task of theology is the preservation of the "truth once delivered." Their knowledge of what was finally decided to be delivered, and the way it was delivered, makes them have not quite the sense of duty of conserving it that those before them had. One result is that the members of these bodies are no longer among those

"Dropping buckets into empty wells,
And growing old in drawing nothing up."

Thinking men and women, then, are too much in earnest regarding life and its problems; they are too eager to understand and to appropriate the real vital truths of religion for use in their every-day lives, to be interested now in the relics of bygone ages. They are now asking and they are seeking earnestly to know, through their own understanding and interpretation, what the real facts regarding the life and the teachings of Jesus, the Christ, were and are. What was the secret of that wonderful life of such marvellous insight and power, of such perennial influence? What did he perceive, what did he live, and what did he

teach that is of value to me here to-day? What that I can appropriate and make use of in my daily life? What that is of value to my sons and daughters, for they are still less satisfied with the things of the past than I?

Another striking characteristic of our time must be borne in mind. Jesus is too large a character, his life and his teachings are fraught with too great a value to all people, the serving of needs too momentous, to allow them to remain longer the sole possession of any organisation or any organisations. The greater laity has finally recognised this and is insisting upon the rights of its own findings and interpretations, and of the great personal and community advantages flowing therefrom.

The results of the patient and disinterested studies and investigations of various noted scholars and groups of scholars of various countries during the past few years, have put into the hands of the layman a great amount of material pertaining to the final selection of the present books of the Bible from among a much larger amount of material to be selected from, the authorship of the various books, the religious beliefs and the prevailing institutions of Jesus' time, his own life and his own teachings, the early Church of the disciples, and the great departure from this early Chris-

tianity when the present Church began to take form in Rome in the fourth century.

In America we know that a great activity is on in this direction, and we have many evidences that it is likewise on in many other countries. So many times during the past few years, it has been asked: Why is it that in America our churches haven't a larger attendance of men? The answer is probably to be found in the fact that the American man is interested primarily in things of use, in things that can be made of use—he with James is primarily a pragmatist. For some time he has been asking regarding Christianity—Will it work? Can it be made to work?

He is convinced now of the wonderful spirit, the conquering power that shot through and permeated the early Christianity of the first three centuries. He is determined to master all things through understanding. He is determined to know through what agencies this was lost—why the results are so small to-day when the possibilities are so great. He is not going to be satisfied with half-truths when he can dig down and know the truth. He is not going to be satisfied with anything built primarily upon speculation and upon ancient theories now discarded in all other realms of knowledge, or even with explanations through "miracle" or through the "supernatural,"

when 1500 years of advancement gives a wonderfully expanded knowledge of God's Laws and of the Divine forces working continually in the world and in human lives.

So he believes that Christianity—at least the Christianity of the Christ—will work, and he is determined to dig down and find how it can be made to work. He recalls that astronomy was at one time under the wing—the smothering wing—of the Church. He recalls that later science was wholly within the domain of the Church; that then politics and statecraft were joined with it—and with what awful results for those countries in incessant turmoil and conflict, and in the degradation of such large masses of the people.

America stands in a unique position among the nations of the world at the present time. If she is true to her great opportunities, she will have a great part to play in the great reconstruction process that will take place, and for a considerable time, after the great World Crisis, and after the forces of suspicion, hatred, and revenge have spent themselves. Great religious and ethical ideas and ideals will be the chief agencies in this reconstruction—and whatever men may say or think, the rule of the Christ, battling with the rule of brutal individualism, suspicion, jealousy, and hatred, will take a tremendous stride forward, and will

prove itself to be *the mighty moulding force* in the shaping of the new conditions. This is a great privilege, then, of the men and women of America.

We must be on the elert, however. We must be fully awake, for there are forces at work abroad that are fast unchaining men's minds and that are giving a new courage to the heart. The following recent utterance is not that of a leader of any radical institution or church organisation. It is that of a free, untrammelled spirit of the Established Church of England.*

Speaking of the conditions to follow the war he says: "Every one is agreed that vast changes are inevitable in social, economic, and political affairs. May it not be, then, that profound modifications will take place in religious thought also? that one result of the world-wide conflict will be a wider realisation of the things that really matter in religion? The furnace-fire of war will burn up much of the wood, hay, and stubble which we have built on the foundation of Christ. Many of us, in the confusion of this bewildering upheaval, are already thinking more of the Sermon on the Mount and less of the Athanasian Creed. For, after all, we say within ourselves, of what avail will

* Rev. A. T. Bannister, M.A., Canon Residentiary of Hereford Cathedral.

be our *filioque* clauses and our *homoousian* orthodoxy, when Christ asks us Christian teachers why, after two thousand years of our ministry among men, we are still so far from persuading the peoples of the world into peace? It seems to me that, for religiously-minded men, the one all-important result of the war must be a new estimate of values as regards theology in its relation to religion, and a new and more insistent effort to define this latter term.

"Now when men are plunged into the wild chaos of a time like this, they begin distressfully to feel that dogma has somehow emptied their religion of its moral interior, has robbed it of its moral code. Hence I think we shall find, after the war, that religion, though more passionately held, will sit more loosely to theology, whether of the institutional, intellectual, or mystical school. The Church will become in fact what in idea it already is, a society of men banded together by a common faith in God, and witnessing to a moral and spiritual ideal of life based upon the principles of love and self-sacrifice revealed in Christ and inspired by His Spirit. It will, speaking broadly, substitute religion for theology and metaphysic; it will take for its text-book the Sermon on the Mount instead of the Epistles of St. Paul; it will aim at the coming of the

Kingdom rather than the progress of the Church. We have most of us got into a habit of mind which all unconsciously identifies the Kingdom of God with the Church. Henceforth we shall recognise that the Kingdom of God, both in fact and in idea, is far wider than any or all of the Churches.

"They (the people) will listen to us, as they listened to our Lord, when we honestly get to close quarters with the living subject, when we remember that it is to the office of a prophet that we clergy are called, as certainly as was that herdsman who followed his flock in Tekoa. It is unworthy of us to be content with the work, ceremonial, customary, almost menial, of the sacrificing priests of Israel. We are called to higher things. The ministry of the Church is not a kind of ceremonial magic, not the repeating of a certain form of words, not the killing of a sheep, the swinging of a censer, the elevating of a chalice. No mind is needed for these things, no inspiration, no intelligence. The ministry of the Church means piloting the teeming, many-sided life around us over an unknown sea to a land which God will show. And if we are to accomplish this mission, the ship must not be piloted by antiquarians, or by metaphysicians, nor yet by mere ecclesiastics, but by prophets—'men of hope and forward-reaching

mind,' who will set their face to the future rather than to the past. What we shall need after the war is international Christianity, civic Christianity, political Christianity, which is a very different thing from ecclesiastical politics."

Everything about us gives unmistakable evidence that the best thought of the age is converging to the point that the Christianity of the Christ has but little to do with any speculations or any formulations of the past; but that it is all the time taking form as Jesus himself epitomised it—Love to God, and love to man. Simple to state, but locked up within them the mightiest force for the uplifting and the glorifying of the *individual* life, and for the remoulding and the higher consummation of all human *relations* that we have yet known. The redeemed Christianity relates to the whole man—mind, body, and soul—not to any mythical saving of the soul merely; the soul needs saving only when the mind and the body work wrong.

And so intelligent men and women who know the never-failing Law of Cause and Effect, and who see it as one of God's immutable and never to be evaded laws, are interested primarily in a means of salvation here and now—which incidentally will take care of all salvation hereafter. One of the

great truths that we are in possession of in this twentieth century is that man can co-operate with God to an hitherto undreamed-of degree, and in the degree in which he does, do the higher powers and forces co-operate with him in all his activities, and make accomplishment doubly sure and of the kind that is abundantly safe and permanent.

Christianity must interest itself, as Jesus enjoined upon it and as he interested himself, in saving bodies as well as souls, in making the daily life that now is, more hopeful, and buoyant, and happy, and strong. In our recovery of the essential content of the religion of the Christ, we will find it not merely a method of escape from the ills and the trials of this life, nor a method of escape from the "wrath to come"; not merely a solace in earthly infirmities and troubles, nor merely an avenue of Divine sympathy for us in these. The religion of the Christ is not a religion of mere negation, it is a religion with a positive building force in the daily life, and the above are but incidents that are contained, all contained, in an infinitely greater content.

To *know* God whom the Christ revealed, and to know him in the manner as by him revealed, is to become happy and strong in the conscious actualising of the Divine leadings and forces and powers that are potential within

us, but that the Christ revealed and explicitly enjoined upon us to realise and use. And so intelligent men and women of to-day are finding that to attempt to encompass the life, the teachings, and therefore the *religion* of the Christ, in cut and dried formulas, to weave them into a crown and to press them upon men's brows, is the very antithesis of the Christ. They now see all too clearly that through this method a Christianity primarily of negation was made to take the place of a religion of faith and courage and of joyous conquering power—a religion of wholeness and of abounding health of mind, body, and spirit.

So men and women who can look bigly and kindly at many of the things in our organised Christianity of to-day, things that they feel are keeping the truer and the more vital and the more wholesome portions of the Christianity of the Christ away from the people, are recognising them as pertaining to the old and now creaking stairway up which we have slowly climbed. They are, on the other hand however, recognising that it is but well and healthy, indeed essential, for all men—in church and out of church—to become acquainted with early beginnings, with pre-mediæval tamperings and speculations and teachings about the Christ, which remain essentially dominant to this day, in order that the far more valuable thing, the

teachings and the gospel of the Christ, may again gain the ascendency, and do for hungering and thirsting men what the Christ so explicitly said they would do.

At this present time the spirit of the Christ is moving in a wonderful manner in the minds and hearts of men everywhere. Jesus is coming to his own again, and the great laity of the world is having its part, in conjunction with the forward-looking men in all our churches, in the great redeeming process that is now in progress. We are in the midst, whether we are yet fully able to grasp it or not, of another great Reformation, no less real, no less gigantic than any that has gone before, and more tremendously far-reaching. It is but the forerunner of a great spiritual—Christian, if you please—Renaissance, that will resemble more than anything else the times of the Early Christianity—but with a vastly enlarged vision and knowledge and influence.

II

THE PRESENT DEMAND TO KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE EARNEST QUEST FOR A RELIGION THAT RELATES ITSELF INTIMATELY TO PRESENT EVERY-DAY LIFE

It was on a train in Montana that a prominent and wealthy Western man, returning home from the East, met an old friend. During their conversation they fell into a very earnest discussion of religion—of Christianity and the Church, as is so often the case at this present time. He finally said to his friend, with an earnestness that bespoke the intense longing of his heart as well as of his mind: "Well, I would willingly give half of all I possess at this moment *to know the truth.* I would like to believe more of it, but I simply can't do it."

There are thousands, there are thousands of thousands in exactly the same condition today, both in our churches—Protestant and Catholic—as well as outside of them. There is also the vast army of young men and women entering now upon the stage of action, in ex-

actly the same mental status and with the same longings.

I was sitting with a group of men in the office of a little Inn down in the lower end of the Blue Ridge Mountains a few days ago. They were all Northern people. One of the company was speaking of a friend, a noted financier and man of large affairs, and of his great interest in and his earnest inquiries and studies into matters pertaining to religion. He concluded by saying: "Our ablest and biggest men seem to be interested in these matters almost more than anything else." We are coming to realise that the Judæan Teacher knew full well whereof he spoke when he said: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

There is at the present time a tremendous interest in all matters pertaining to religion, and there is a great questioning and readjustment all along the lines of organised Christianity, not only among us but throughout the entire world. Mighty changes in thought and in religious concepts are now taking place. Untold numbers have arrived and still greater numbers are continually arriving at the cross-roads of thought and of action. The old shells are breaking and things can never again be as they have been.

So many agencies have combined during the past fifty years or so in throwing such floods of light upon early beginnings, that vast multitudes are now having their questionings and their suspicions confirmed, that our prevailing Christianity has been after all too much the formulation of traditions, early speculations and beliefs, and therefore dogmas *about* the Christ, instead of the vitalising, life-directing truths as so simply and so clearly enunciated *by* him. To cast the former aside or to push them so completely into the background that Jesus' own redeeming and vitalising truth may gain the ascendency and dominate the thought, inspire the spirit, and therefore direct the life, is now becoming the reality of this our day.

There is a power here, increasing numbers are finding, which, when adequately grasped, realised, and used, will lift up and will intensify the power of the individual life to an hitherto undreamed-of degree. When moreover it becomes sufficiently the controlling impulse and power in individual lives, it will completely remould all human relations—community, national, and international.

The great world war—almost unbelievable and so essentially unnecessary had we lived our Christianity instead of speculating primarily about its Founder—is significant of mighty changes taking place along many lines

of thought and of world activity. In no realm perhaps is this more evident than in the realm of religion, except it may be in the realm of an increasingly awakened and an increasingly onsweeping Democracy.

Has Christianity failed? We have heard it asked repeatedly. The consensus of opinion among thinking men and women is: No, Christianity has not failed, but ecclesiasticism has all but failed. Way back 1900 years ago was one whose teachings, if made uppermost and therefore if actually followed, would have led us long before this past the time when the inexcusable, brutal, senseless slaughters, and the worse than brutal waste of the results of men's labours that is fresh among us, would have been a thing of the past.

We cannot from the facts that are now before us conclude otherwise than that the essentials of his teachings and revelations, and therefore the real vital purpose and power of his mission, got relegated to a position of but minor importance and in many respects completely thrust into the background, by the preponderance that was given to a system of bewildering and befogging and therefore enervating theories about him. The results have been so thoroughly unsatisfactory that the men and women of thought and of real religious aspiration are crying—Enough; I will hence-

forth follow the life and the teachings of the Christ as I can read and interpret them for myself; it cannot be that he intended otherwise—he who cried: "Why judge ye not even of yourselves what is right?"

Jesus did not teach a system—he taught no system at all—or anything that can be legitimately transformed into a system that would do violence to men's—good men's—reason, or that could be organised to serve the purposes of either greed for power or greed for gain.

Personally I believe, and I stand squarely upon the belief, that the great life-moulding principles and truths that Jesus so unerringly perceived, lived, and taught—of man's wonderful access to God the Father, and of the mystic force that relates and unites them, and of the transforming and redeeming, and more, *the building power* of love, are so much greater and so infinitely more valuable than the ecclesiastical dogmas that grew up about his person, that I rejoice to see the falling away of the latter whereby the ground is being made less encumbered and made ready for the essential truths that will yet redeem men and women to their higher, diviner selves, and through them will yet redeem the world.

Jesus did not teach that God is a monster, and therefore its concomitant, the inherent sinfulness and degradation of man and of human

nature. He perceived unerringly, he lived and he taught—Our Father in Heaven, the unity of the human spirit with the Divine. It was therefore the Divinity of Man, made actual in the degree that man lifts his mind and his spirit up to the Divine and lives in this realisation—with all the transcendent and transforming insights and powers and the enfolding peace that will follow, and follow inevitably, in its train.

There is a tremendous interest and enthusiasm in the quest of this new emphasis in religion to-day, and thanks to the great sifting process that is now thoroughly manifest and that is finally eliminating completely for many, those things that have done violence to human reason. If one gets Jesus' great fundamental he can rest at ease and drive completely from his mind and interest the inconsequentials, all things foreign thereto—the remnants of a pre-mediæval age, once a help perhaps, but now a hindrance. In doing this he steps at once into the goodly company of the great prophets and the great mystics of all the ages.

I do not undervalue the past—it holds the stairs up which we have climbed. But we must remember that we have climbed, and that the voice of God and every law of God is continually to climb on. We must remember that the higher scholarship in its *free and*

unbiased investigations in connection with the various books of the Bible, the revelations of archæological activities, a marvellously advancing science, and the natural course of evolution during 1500 years, have advanced us considerably beyond the age of myth, and of superstition.

All this has given us a range of knowledge and knowledge of a universe infinity beyond those who in the fourth and several succeeding centuries formed our prevailing system of Christianity. It has changed some of course, but fundamentally it is the same as formed or rather as formulated by those whose total knowledge of the universe was a flat earth with its pile of seven heavens one above the other, and whose successors fought almost with the desperation of madmen to prevent "restless spirits and impious heretics" such as Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, and others, from upsetting the revealed rule and the order of God's universe with their silly fancies. "Not to throw Christ's Kingdom into confusion with his silly fancies," was one of the early warnings of Christ's vicars and God's custodians to Kepler.

God didn't seem, however, to have too orthodox a respect for their systems or for their authority, for he has raised up innumerable fearless investigators and great scientists who

have dared to announce new discoveries and who have helped to lead us on to our present, but not yet ended, knowledge of the universe and of God's laws and forces that rule and that work continually and unerringly therein. It is from these that we take our science and our continually broadening knowledge, rather than from those of the time of the Church Fathers who formulated their crude, necessarily crude, and many times erroneous systems, and then endeavoured to stifle with the anathema, with excommunication, with death here and damnation hereafter—"eternally, never-ending, forever and forever"—those who were impious enough to question, and not to remain satisfied with the truth as "handed down by authority."

We take neither our science nor hardly anything else from the latter; but by some strange force or freak of human nature, we have been taking from them our religion, or rather our formulation of Christianity, and it has occurred to us only of late years to recognise and to examine into the stupid folly of it, as well as the great loss we sustain through it. A mighty change is in evidence in Christendom now, however.

In our Theological Schools a new and distinctive note is at last sounding. The following by a noted professor of Christian theology

in one of our leading universities is significant:* "Seldom is a generation called upon to face such radical readjustments of thought as confront men to-day who are trying honestly to do their duty in the field of Christian theology." After speaking, then, of the prevailing methods of the past, he continues: "Within the past fifteen or twenty years, however, a revolution in method has taken place, and to-day the best theological seminaries are confidently and aggressively undertaking constructive work with principles and methods which were formerly dreaded, because of their 'destructive' tendencies. There is in vogue to-day a 'new' theology, which has passed the stage of timid and apologetic beginnings, and which is contributing in ever-increasing measure to the religious life of our day. . . .

"Modern theologians are not concerned primarily with theological systems. They are rather concerned with the failure of traditional theology to answer satisfactorily certain pressing questions which modern men are asking. Something is wrong with the method. . . . The significant movements in modern theology are not so much attempts to revise the content of doctrine as they are attempts to discover a method which shall be convincing.

*Gerald Birney Smith, Professor of Christian Theology, the University of Chicago.

Men want to be satisfied that they are in possession of a way of inquiry which will lead them to know the truth. Revision of content is secondary to this primary problem.

"One should realise that theology to-day is passing through the same reconstruction of method which has taken place in practically all branches of human learning. To-day we feel that the method of studying the facts before us is in every way better than the method of appeal to authority. We want the truth, not mere authorised doctrine. Because our religious welfare is so closely bound up with theological beliefs, we are naturally extremely sensitive to proposed changes. We are prone to continue to feel that some 'authoritative' basis for theology is essential, even when we have really adopted a genuinely empirical way of asking questions. The time has come, however, when we ought squarely to face the question whether we are allowing the empirical method to have credit for what it is really doing. Are we not in danger to-day of trying to save the form of conformity to authority, when we ought rather to be disclosing the religious value of a fearless, open-minded quest for the truth? The latter position would align theology with the great constructive forces of the modern world."

Ecclesiastical Christianity of the "author-

ity" type, men and women of thought and of the higher aspiration are now finding, is but a crude thing, compared to the life-ennobling and the life-moulding teachings, and therefore the Christianity of the Christ. Out of it a new Christianity is now evolving incomparably truer and stronger and therefore more usable, one that is already becoming a real directing and building force in men's and women's lives as well as a source of infinite joy. The whole world of thinking and truth-loving men and women are becoming enlisted in its furtherance.

It holds a tremendous hope for the immediate future of Christianity. It holds a tremendous hope for a more vital and a more Christ-like individual, national, and international life.

III

THE THOUGHT, THE EXISTING CONDITIONS, AND THE RELIGION OF JESUS' TIME

We have spoken of the great interest there is to-day in religion, not only in our own country but throughout the world. With us it is naturally an interest in Christianity. Because we were born and bred in this religion, we *naturally* feel it to be the truest and the most valuable.

No man can be adequately understood apart from his time and his people. In order that men and women of twentieth-century minds and knowledge and habits may get a knowledge of the teachings of Jesus and of the Christianity of his time, a certain knowledge of his time, its conditions, and its people is essential. It is essential that we may the more intelligently distinguish between his own simple hillside teachings, and the strange theories and inventions about him woven by men of fourth-century minds.

Were one aiming to deal with "The Fundamentals of Christianity," he would now find it

a difficult task. He would ask if it were the Christianity represented by the Greek Catholic, the Roman Catholic, or the Protestant system. Again, he would ask if it were the Christianity as given forth in those simple, direct, open-air, hillside teachings of the Judæan Carpenter that moved men with such a wonderful spirit; or the Christianity of the Apostolic Age, still simple and drawing in its effects upon men; or this same general system when it was annexed by Rome the Conqueror in the fourth and fifth centuries, and when she imposed upon it many of her own elaborate state ceremonials and systems, and many of her own pagan rites; or the Christianity of the period of the Reformation; or if the Christianity of a later period of the Protestant form, which one of the upwards of two hundred varieties, denominations, or sects is meant.

Peoples or nations stand generally as embodiments of some particular trait, or characteristic, or power, or line of development. Immediately concerning us are chiefly the Roman and the Jewish nations. Rome stood primarily as a nation of organisation. She developed and gave also to the world its most noted systems of law. She was also a great military nation, and practically conquered the world, such as it then was—principally the nations lying around the Mediterranean. Many nations paid tribute

to her. Hundreds of thousands of men and women were captured and carried off into slavery by her at the conclusions of her various campaigns, which later, however, developed almost entirely into raids for plunder. Her successes, her purely pagan outlook, the excesses and later the debauchery of her rulers and governing classes, finally brought her to her decline. About the beginning of the Christian era, she was already in her degenerate stage.

The Jewish nation for many centuries had been a God-loving and God-fearing people. She stood for the development of religion, as no nation before her, and it is quite safe to say as no nation since her time, had stood. Many *great prophets* had arisen in her midst from generation to generation. She evolved, as no nation up to her time had evolved, the idea of one God—Jehovah. Gradually a fixed system of religion—an elaborate, ecclesiastical system—took form, which killed the real *spirit of religion* which she formerly had. Bishops, priests, and ecclesiastics had come to take the place almost entirely of her former prophets. Religion came to be an inert, dead, lifeless system, primarily of form and ceremony. It was an Oriental nation, given to Oriental forms of expression, abounding in symbolism, as is readily seen in the various books of the Old

Testament, which is primarily a history of the growth, the ideals, and the life of the early Hebrew people.

She was at this time also under the domination of Roman rule. The Roman representative or ruler in Judæa was Pontius Pilate. He and his sub-officers ruled, as Roman representatives ruled, with an iron hand in a soft glove. He collected regular tribute from the people, and when the needs of Rome on account of greater expenses and excesses were greater, he collected more tribute. Expeditions were sent to Judæa from time to time and thousands of its citizens were carried away to be sold as slaves in Rome. There was a general feeling of uncertainty, of unrest, and at times bitterness, although the true feelings were generally held in sufficient check. There was a prophecy, a tradition, an expectation, which now became very great and general, that a Deliverer would be sent to them. The coming of the Messiah was now almost momentarily expected by them.

In the year 28 or 29 A.D., there came one John—John the Baptist—proclaiming to the people—Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. And again—Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!

He was earnest, zealous, and persuasive. There is a tradition that Moses later came as

Elijah and that Elijah in turn came later as John—this John the Baptist. This is speculation, however, of which we know nothing. He preached the coming of the kingdom with power and persuasiveness, and many came to him to be baptised in the River Jordan, following a certain Jewish custom that had been in existence for a long time. Among others came Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph and Mary, to be baptised of John; though later in his own ministry we have no accounts that he himself baptised. He seems to have accepted this rite at the hands of John as the beginning, the initiation of his own public ministry.

He was one with a great aptitude for the things of the spirit. His father, Joseph, was a journeyman, a carpenter. He and his wife, Mary, were people in very modest circumstances but of a very high type of life. Jesus had four brothers and several sisters, he being the eldest. He was regarded by all of his own time as the son of Joseph and of Mary, and no attempt was made to give him, and no suggestion was ever heard as to, any other type of parentage until a long time after his death and chiefly the early part of the fourth century when Rome began, after annexing Christianity, to formulate and build an extensive and complex system of dogma, creed, and ceremonial

upon it. In this process the Church Councils began to promulgate various things and theories regarding Jesus, of which he, his own disciples, and the people of the early Church up to that time had known nothing.

Jesus as a boy went to school as did the neighbours' children. He learned his own language, the Aramaic. We know practically nothing of him, then, until at the time he comes to John, except one meagre account of him at the age of twelve we have, when he appears in the Temple before the doctors and the learned men of the Hebrew doctrines. We then have the account of his asking and answering questions of a type that would give the suggestion of his being one possessing *unusual insight and wisdom* for one of his age. The same account we have of Siddartha Gautama, the Buddha, also at the same age, when he appears in the Temple before the wise men, and we are told: "He replied to all the questions of the sages; but when he questioned them, even the wisest among them were silenced."

From the age of twelve to between twenty-nine and thirty, we have no accounts whatever of the life of Jesus. We are told that he followed the trade of his father, that of a carpenter, and worked with him. There is a tradition, which seems in some respects plausible, that being interested in the development of the

inner, spiritual life, he went, when a very young man, with a caravan, one of the numerous ones that passed regularly on one of the direct highways to India, and there gave years of study with a brotherhood in one of the old monasteries, in the development of the inner life and powers.

At his home the three principal sects were the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes. The latter were given to a study of these same things; they were quiet in their lives, keeping their teachings from the general public as much as possible, and it may be that he received much of his unusual spiritual insight and knowledge of life under their instruction. Again, it may be that an unusual—indeed, a supreme—aptitude for the things of the Spirit accounts for his unique and wonderful insight into life and its forces, the same as the unusual aptitude for music produces now and then a great and marked musician; or for mathematics, a great mathematician; or for thought, imagery and expression, a great poet. He shares with his people the hope of a Messiah. He believes also with them that the end of the world or the end of the age is soon coming, and that it may be even accomplished during the lifetime of some then living.

Now Jesus speaks. What has he to tell? What to teach? Does he bring to us any au-

thentic accounts of the life beyond, that which mankind would so eagerly know? Does he throw any distinct light upon the problem of good and evil? There are many subjects of which we wish he had spoken, but of which he remained silent.

But he does teach doctrines so new, so startlingly new, or teaches with such a new and different emphasis upon the old doctrines, and in such a simple and straightforward manner, that he appeals at once and evidently with great power to those who sat around him and who listened to his words. He speaks, we are told, as "one having authority." Indeed, this is a characteristic of his teaching or ministry that attracted the throngs to him, that made them marvel at his method. Their own teachers spoke always on the authority of others—"It is written," "The Prophets have said." He did not frequent, except occasionally, the ordinary places of worship, but he chose the open places, the hillsides, the green plot along the lake-side, the open air. He always spoke so plainly that even a child could understand. His illustrations, taking many times the form of parables, were always in terms of the common life that all were familiar with.

It should be noted here, that for the Jews there was one God, Jehovah. The Romans

had various gods—all pagan peoples had. Frequently, a great commander or a great ruler was deified and made a god. The same as later on, under the Romanised Christianity, a prominent prelate or bishop was made, after death, a saint, by some Council proceedings.

The God of the Jews, however, was the God of the Jews alone, not of the Gentiles, or of any other nation or people. They were therefore the chosen people of God—chosen because they said they were, the same as some branches of the Christian Church later on claimed and even piously proclaimed that they were God's sole representatives—Christ's vicars on the earth, that they alone held the keys of Heaven. So, with the Jews, God was a purely tribal God.

But the ministry of the Judæan Carpenter is now on in earnest. Jesus taught—from the very beginning to the end of his ministry—*not only the unity but the universal Fatherhood of God.* He proclaimed immediately with it, then, *the universal Brotherhood of Man.* As a great scholar has said: "This is the end of tribalism, the inauguration of humanity. God, it is said in the Acts, has made all nations of one blood to dwell together on the face of the earth. Here is a revolution greater than any political or social revolution in history. In the Greek or Latin writers, you may find faint breathings of a common humanity; you will

find no recognition of universal brotherhood." Jesus' great fundamental teaching—the Fatherhood of God—was at heart a great spiritual truth. He proclaimed immediately with it and as if a part of it, as we have just said, the universal brotherhood of man.

This was hardly necessary, for when we once take the care to ascertain exactly what Jesus' conception and teaching of God was, we see that given the one, the other must necessarily follow. He evidently wanted, though, to take no chances of being misunderstood, as he found he was so often misunderstood even by his disciples. The Fatherhood of God means, according to Jesus' teachings, as I hope we shall soon clearly see, the Divine Sonship of man, and from the Sonship flows the inevitable Brotherhood.

In order that we may get some greater evidences of certainty that this was Jesus' primal or fundamental teaching, upon which he was desirous that everything else rest, let us note the following. One day when he was teaching a group around him, numerous questions were asked him. We are told that then a certain lawyer arose. A lawyer was a scribe, or an interpreter and teacher of the Ecclesiastical Law and observances. His question was: "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said unto him, "Thou shalt

love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." How truly fundamental this becomes of Jesus' purpose, mission, and teachings when coupled with the announcement: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."

Says one of the noted scholars of the century, Goldwin Smith: "Let the creed, the liturgy, the fane, the ecclesiastical order be what they may, the universal Fatherhood of God, which implies God's eternal care for us now and forever, and the universal brotherhood of man, are the essence and the sum of all religion. If we have ceased to believe in them, the end of religion has come. We cannot go back to the Pantheon; and the religion of humanity without a God, to which we are invited to go forward, though it may be an enthusiasm, is not a religion at all."

Search as I will, I cannot conclude otherwise than that he is right. The great trend of thought in this direction, on the part of thinking men and women the world over, is also to my mind a fact of tremendous significance.

Lincoln, who was unquestionably one of the

most profoundly religious men our country has known, one of the greatest of Christians, although a member of no church, on being asked why he did not unite with some church organisation, replied: "Because I find difficulty in giving my assent, without mental reservation, to the complicated statements of Christian doctrine which constitute their articles of belief and confessions of faith.

"When any church will inscribe over its altar, as its sole qualification of membership, the Saviour's condensed statement of the substance of both law and gospel: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself, that church shall I join with all my heart and soul."

"On religious matters he thought deeply," says Lamon, "and his opinions were positive. He was by nature religious, full of religious sentiment. He had a sagacity almost instinctive in sifting the false from the true. He was ever seeking the right, the real, and the true."

Now in order that this great fundamental of Jesus be something of real significance to us in a concrete manner, and in order that it may do for us what Jesus distinctly says it will do for all who grasp its significance and appropriate its truth, what, let us inquire, was his teaching

of God? His own words are—"God is spirit" —not that God is a spirit, which is now known to be a faulty translation of the Greek, but, "God is spirit," Being, Life,—the Spirit of Life projecting Itself into existence in varied forms. The Spirit of Infinite Power and Love. The Divine Essence, the Animating Force, the Essential Life of all—the Life, therefore, of our life, our very life itself. How truly, then, "In Him we live and move and have our being." Truly and wondrously it is Emmanuel—God in us.

As we connect ourselves through a vital, living realisation—which must come through the channel of the mind and then reach down through the whole inner being—with this Life, we then become channels through which the Divine Energy and Life manifests and works. When we do this—I do not speak a fancy—we come then into the Christ-consciousness, truly sons of God and brothers in Christ. "Christ is the name of sonship—God, in us. Jesus personally expressed that relation, supremely, ideally."

Vitally and fully to realise this fact, is to realise the fact that we are spiritual beings, manifesting while in this material world through a material body; and in proportion as we live in this thought and this realisation, do the intuitions, the powers, and the forces of the

spiritual world become the springs of thought and of action, and I may say of accomplishment, in every phase of our lives.

Truly then, as a noted writer has said: "The living Christ is within men, and upon invitation the Divine touches the human."

In this way we come to have dominion over the forces and conditions of the body and over material conditions in the degree that we grow to the full stature and use of this great mystic realisation. This is Jesus' direct teaching. It was Dr. W. F. Evans, in that splendid book, "The Divine Law of Cure," who said: "A union with God, which brings our consciousness of individuality down to the lowest point, and makes God the All in All, as exhibited in the life of Jesus, who could say, 'I and my Father are one,' is the highest condition of life and blessedness."

Jesus' great *ideal,* that he taught in season and out of season, is the Kingdom of God or of Heaven, upon the transcendent gains and the transcendent blessedness of which he, we might almost say, continually dwells. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." And immediately he adds: "Neither shall they say, 'Lo here,' or 'Lo there,' for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Combining his great fundamental with his

great ideal, can anything be plainer as to what his aim and his mission really was?

The son of Joseph and Mary, through his supreme aptitude for the things of the Spirit, realised, as no one before and no one since has realised, that there is an insurgence of the Divine in and through the human, when the human, *through desire and through will,* meets the conditions whereby this can become a reality.

The Divine Wisdom and Power works in and through the human in the degree that the human in consciousness realises its true Reality, and so meets the conditions whereby this can come about. It is, so to speak, rightly to connect one's self with the great reservoir of Life. A plant, deriving its sustenance from the soil, cannot have this connection broken or materially interfered with, and maintain an ideal growth and form, if indeed it continue to live at all. Man cannot fail to make and to keep his right relations with the true source of his life, unless it be with the result of a mere physical existence, uncertain, weak, and dwarfed, and piteously below his possibilities.

We will eventually find that the "fall of man" consists in his failure to realise his essential and true identity. The atonement is the enthronement of the Christ within. It was through his supreme knowledge and wisdom

of the Divine that the son of Joseph and Mary became the Christ. He thus became the Saviour of men by pointing out to man the great thing needful to be saved, and to bring him thereby into right relations with the true Source and reality of his being—"my Father and your Father," as he so distinctly stated it.

IV

WHAT JESUS REALISED, REVEALED, AND TAUGHT AS GAINED FROM A DIRECT STUDY OF HIS OWN LIFE AND TEACHINGS, UNTRAMMELLED BY TRADITION OR BY "AUTHORITY"

If the mission or the teachings of Jesus were dependent upon any *one*, or upon any *particular* saying of his, it would be absolutely impossible to-day to tell with any degree of certainty what his mission, or what his teaching was. He was the culmination of a long and historic line of prophets. Although his own work was primarily that of a prophet, so unique and so transcendent was it that he is more than a prophet.

Jesus reduced nothing to writing; all was given through the uttered word and the active life. The earliest record that we have, that contained in the Gospel of Mark, was reduced from hearsay and tradition to written form, between thirty and forty years after he had finished his work here. The other Gospels, two of which had their foundation to a great

extent from Mark's Gospel, followed along a number of years later. The Gospel of John was written the early part of the second century.

The difficulty among us of recording accurately the words of any one, spoken thirty to forty years before, or with the likelihood of their being received as at all authoritative on the part of intelligent, thinking people, is apparent to all. Especially is this true when the recorded saying was not heard by the one recording it, but came through the report of another or of others.

Jesus spoke in his own language, the Aramaic; the Gospels were all written in Greek, and not an especially high order of Greek as is now well known.

Another great difficulty that Jesus experienced was the tendency on the part of his hearers to drag down his sayings by purely material interpretations. So far ahead of his time was he, that they seemed incapable of perceiving and grasping the great spiritual content of those teachings that have made him the supreme teacher of all time. This was the tendency always on the part of his disciples also. Continually he was rebuking them for it. We might almost say that it was the great tragedy of his life.

One who realises the great difficulty of ren-

dering exact meanings or equivalents *in translation,* will realise how difficult it would be to bring a traditional saying from Aramaic into Greek, and then from Greek into English, German, French, or whatever language it might be, and be sure of preserving the *exact* content in meaning of the one uttering the saying. The variation of a single word might make a vast difference in meaning. There was no punctuation in the original, and there were no verse divisions. These were all supplied—arbitrarily supplied—later. We know to-day how the use of, how the placing of a particular mark in punctuation may make a vast difference in context and meaning.

There is another thing that we cannot lose sight of—the various interpolations that were made in the New Testament Scriptures. That there were numerous interpolations, as well as changes of arrangement, is now a well-authenticated and a well-established fact. Later, following the days of the Apostolic Church, when the creed makers began to do their work, with their extensive metaphysical speculations and formulations of the fourth century, followed by the still greater corruptions of the seventh century, we can readily see how easy and how natural it would be to make interpolations in the text here and there, *to suit these formations.* Those, therefore, who claim that such

changes were made, may be abundantly right in their claim.

If, therefore, the teachings and the mission of Jesus were made to depend upon any one saying of his, we can readily see, in the light of the foregoing, how impossible it would be for us to arrive at any adequate knowledge of what he really taught. Fortunately, however, we are not left in doubt as to his purpose and teaching, and therefore as to his great mission. His purpose was so distinctly stated by him and was so *persistently reiterated* by both word and act, that he who would know, can know.

As the supreme purpose and work of Jesus was to reveal God to man, and thereby reveal man to himself, his idea of God is fundamental. It is the very fountain-head itself. The Jews of the days of the prophets and the Jews of his day were taught and believed that God—Jehovah—the one God, was their God and their Father. He was their God and their Father, but not the Father of any other nation or people. But even with them, his fatherhood was primarily national and not *individual.*

In Moses and Isaiah we get glimpses of him as being a God of hope and trust and help, one upon whom the individual can call, but at the time of Jesus this was scarcely a conception, let alone a possession, on the part of

the people. The new and almost startling revelation that Jesus made, marks the greatest advance in religious conception and practice, or at least in possible practice, in the history of mankind.

The foundation of Old Testament time, and still more pronouncedly of the religion of Israel in Jesus' time, was the *Law*. It had been pronounced, it had been written, and was in the custody of the Rabbis. It was guarded zealously; uniformly and almost by rote it was interpreted. It was so thoroughly "hedged" about, that it seems almost as if the hedge were the supreme thing—of greater importance than the things it guarded.

At the time of Jesus, the voice of the Prophet had ceased, no Prophet had spoken for close to three hundred years. The Scribe had taken his place. The Prophet had his face to the future, and his ear open to the Divine Voice within. The Scribe had his face to the past, with the belief that the Divine Voice had ceased to speak. It was natural, therefore, for them to believe that the word once given should be zealously guarded; that it should be hedged about even to the extent of being idolised. It was to be the rule of conduct, and admitted of no variation. It grew to be exaggerated and grew in importance. An able Bible scholar and writer in dealing with these

conditions has said:* "We see from the Gospels that the popular religion of that day had become wholly externalised and legalistic. Only through the outward and material could men approach and please the God of Heaven. . . . It is true that a common name of God at the time of Jesus was the Holy One, but the rabbinic conception of his holiness was superficial. We see the Scribe's idea of holiness in his own life and endeavour. He washed the outside of cups and platters, while his own heart was full of extortion and excess (Matt. xxiii, 25). . . . His holiness was ceremonial, not vital. And this was his thought of the holiness of God. It was removal from ceremonial uncleanness, and hence was physical rather than moral. To the Pharisee, the thought that God could regard with any favour a man who was Levitically unclean was repellent, and he drew his robes about him with horror when Jesus ate with publicans and sinners."

In passing, then, from the Old Testament and the later Jewish writings to the Gospels, he again says: "In doing so we shall find that between the dominant Old Testament conception of God and the conception of him which Jesus had, the contrast is profound; while be-

* "The Revelation of Jesus," by George Holley Gilbert, Ph.D., D.D. The Macmillan Co.

tween the contemporaneous Jewish conception and that of Jesus, there is an illimitable gulf."

We find, therefore, that when Jesus appeared, the religion of Israel was formalised and externalised. It was a matter of form and ceremonial observances. No one spoke with authority. The Scribe read, "It is written," "The Prophet hath said." Into this dead level of religion and of life comes the Galilean Teacher, the Carpenter's Son; he comes with a manner and with a message so transcendently different from those to which the people were accustomed, that he immediately stood out and before all as one who spoke with the voice of authority.

His message, the coming of the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven, as he most frequently put it, marks the very beginning of his ministry. It was also the one constant factor right through to its close. God is Spirit, he taught. There is an inner spiritual realm where our spirit can come into intimate conscious relations with God. His own relationship was so natural and so intimate that he employed almost continually the term, Father.

The first, we might say, to enter fully and consciously into this relationship, he had found it so wonderful, that his great desire was to make it known to all men, that they also might

be drawn into it. This he realised, this he taught, this was his supreme revelation to mankind.

We have glimpses—indeed, wonderful glimpses—of this same teaching on the part of other earlier prophets in Israel. It was far, however, from being the common possession of the people of his time. We have breathings also of this same teaching on the part of various inspired ones in other religions. We find it now and then in their various sacred books. It is indeed the one constant factor in all religions. In the sacred books of the East antedating our own Old Testament Scriptures, we find great spiritual truths, as the following: "He who meditates on God, attains God." "Those who know Him as dwelling within become immortal." "He is the bright sun beyond darkness at the hour of death." "There is no end of misery, save in the knowledge of God." "By this knowledge comes immortal life." "Truth alone, not falsehood, conquers. By truth is opened the road to the Supreme abode." And again, "Round and round, within a wheel, roams the vagrant soul, so long as it fancies itself different and apart from the Supreme. It becomes truly immortal when upheld by him."

And then, more familiar to us, from the Hebrew prophets we have the following:

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." And again, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." "Because thou hast made the Most High thy habitation there shall no evil befall thee." And still again, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." "Trust ye in the Lord forever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." There are many instances that might be cited both before and since the beginning of the Christian era, showing that many messengers of God proclaimed the one great truth underlying all religions and, therefore, all true religion—the consciousness of God in the soul of man.

The constant factor in all religion—the Divine rule in the heart of man—was, however, given a uniquely personal exposition by the Judæan Teacher, who carried it to its fulness, in a simple and easy-to-be-understood manner. The fact that he not only taught it, but the fact that he lived it here among men, constitutes him the great Messenger of God to man. His vivid and concrete presentation of truth is indeed the culmination of all that had been foreshadowed by his predecessors, and is the fulfilment of Law and Prophets. The old the-

ocracy of Israel, wonderful as it was in many ways, contains many striking conceptions and utterances linking the Divine and the human.

It nevertheless lacks the idea of a close personal relationship. There was a certain binding link that was missing. "What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear (reverence) the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul?" Tell this to a child among us to-day and it means very little to him. To the grown mature mentality it may be a source of inspiration, a source of reverence, but in reality very little to him in the actual affairs of every-day life. The time was ripe and the time was waiting for one who could know God intimately, so intimately that he could translate this knowledge into terms of every-day life.

Born in a humble workman's home, out from the ranks of the common life, came the Messenger of God, who was to open the way, and himself lead the way, that man might find his right relations with the infinite Source of his being, and that the life and the powers of this infinite Source might become more concretely and more happily operative in his own life. He had a great innate, we might almost say, a supreme, aptitude for the things of the Spirit. His was a knowledge so intuitive that from

the very beginning we might almost say, although increasing as he grew and increased in knowledge, there seemed to be constantly a sense of filial relationship between himself and God. It is on account of the nature of this relationship, undoubtedly, that the term Father is so constantly used by him.

He was in no sense a speculator in regard to abstract truth. All of his teachings are the result of his *direct* experience of God. He never gives evidence of any other thought than that his life is essentially one, in quality always one, with the life of God. "I and my Father are one." He can conceive of his life as no other than as one with the Father's life. All of his teachings and all of his acts are portrayals of this relationship, or rather the experience of this relationship on his part.

It is the fact that he does experience God, that makes him so inspiring and so trustworthy a teacher concerning God. He follows completely the light within, the light which lighteth every man coming into the world. And the great value of his teaching is that this same light burns, although perhaps not with the same degree of illumination, at least at first, in every one of us. His characteristic phrase "The Kingdom of God," or "The Kingdom of Heaven," was always in his mind the realm of an inner experience and realisa-

tion, out of which was to spring the active daily life. It is within you, he said in unmistakable terms. It is the conscious active relationship between man and God when through desire and through will man voluntarily enters into this relationship.

With Jesus it was a relationship so natural and so personal, that it continually bore all the characteristics, as has already been said, of a filial relationship between him and the Father. He found supreme satisfaction in this relationship. His great desire was to lead all men into this same relationship. Not only his compatriots the Jews, but the Gentiles as well. And as his ministry and his experience grew, it became his desire that this be made known to all nations of men.

Jesus not only speaks constantly of the Kingdom of God, and of his desire to lead all men into a knowledge of this kingdom; but he also speaks of himself as having a unique knowledge of this kingdom. Of this we see evidence while yet in his teens—"Know ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" was his reply to his mother when she impatiently waited for him at the Temple. The account that we have of the way this answer was received on the part of his mother, indicates that she had but an inadequate idea of the unique and all-absorbing consciousness

that burned within him. Later when he had entered upon his active ministry his reply, when told that his mother and his brethren were waiting without and would like to speak with him, was also most significant in this respect.

From these and from other incidents that the meagre accounts of his life give us occasional peeps into, there is evidence of a continual sense on his part of possessing a unique knowledge of the Kingdom of God, and therefore as standing in a unique relationship with God, and also of the fact that the great passion of his life and the great mission of his life was the leading of others into a knowledge of these same unique relations with God.

He continually prayed the Father for light and for power that he might preserve these relations and that he might adequately lead others also into this relationship. He spent much time alone in communion with the Father, in order that he might hold himself continually true to this relationship, that through desire and through will he had made the absorbing passion and the one great controlling factor in his life.

To me the words of that great spiritual philosopher, Fichte, are significant in showing this great distinguishing characteristic of

Jesus, and that sets him apart as the great spiritual teacher of all time.

In showing that Jesus as he is presented to us in the Gospel of John never conceived of his life in any other light than as one with the Father's Life, he says:

"But it is precisely the most prominent and striking trait in the character of the Johannean Jesus, ever recurring in the same shape, that he will know nothing of such a separation of his personality from his Father, and that he earnestly rebukes others who attempt to make such a distinction; while he constantly assumes that he who sees him sees the Father, that he who hears him hears the Father, and that he and the Father are wholly one; and he unconditionally denies and rejects the notion of an independent being in himself, such an unbecoming elevation of himself having been made an objection against him by misunderstanding. To him Jesus was not God, for to him there was no independent Jesus whatever; but God was Jesus, and manifested himself as Jesus."

In setting forth, then, how universally Divine Being incarnates itself in human life, he says: "From the first standing-point the Eternal Word becomes flesh, assumes a personal, sensible, and human existence, without obstruction or reserve, in all times, and in every indi-

vidual man who has a living insight into his unity with God, and who actually and in truth gives up his personal life to the Divine Life within him,—precisely in the same way as it became incarnate in Jesus Christ."

Jesus did not reach this condition and this realisation through a period of trouble and doubt, nor did he reach it over the road of the philosopher, or of the metaphysician.

He undoubtedly believed himself from the very start as one possessed of a unique understanding of, and therefore in unique relations with God, and his whole after life demonstrated that this was undoubtedly true. His supreme sense of Divine self-realisation was the pure and absolute truth of inner consciousness,—self-existent and independent. He thus had the equipment of a great spiritual genius and leader, and his later active life demonstrated that he "possessed the supreme individuality of history." The incident at the Temple in connection with his parents when a mere youth, indicates even then a consciousness, on his part, of his unique connection with the spiritual realm (Luke ii, 41-50); even then it would seem that he was somehow conscious of the fact that he was to be a teacher and a revealer of great spiritual truth.

His subsequent years of study and preparation, his delving into the innermost spiritual

meanings of the teachings of some of the great Hebrew prophets, his own independent thought and meditation, his communing with the Father, all served undoubtedly to increase this consciousness on his part, as well as to give him due preparation as the world's supreme spiritual teacher.

The years pass, and when we again have an account of him, it is at the time of a great spiritual revival that has come into being among his people, or at least the beginning of a great spiritual revival.

John the Baptist has broken away from the teachings or the tenets of the Law, as interpreted and handed out by the scribes. He has become a revolutionist in connection with the religion of Israel. He has gone into the quiet and his own soul has communed with its Maker. He also has caught a glimpse of the divinity of human nature; of his relations with God, and therefore all men's relations with God.

He comes to the various centres with his stirring message, that the Kingdom of God is at hand, and that men are to prepare for the reign of God in their hearts. It was a stirring and a drawing appeal by a unique and powerful personality; and from the accounts, we must believe that *it thrilled* all the land of Judæa and the country of the Jordan. In addi-

tion to these vigorous and stirring words of life, he employed an old Jewish ceremony, that of baptism, initiating his converts or his followers into their new life. Jesus is drawn with the other great multitudes that go out day after day to hear John.

He finds in him a kindred spirit. He finds his message a kindred message. He evidently is ready to begin his own ministry for which he has been preparing and waiting for years, and he accepts the rite of baptism at the hands of John, as an initiation into his own life-work as a teacher. From the very beginning of his ministry, he is conscious of being the Messiah, the Supreme Teacher and Revealer of God to man and of God's rule in the heart of man. It is clearly evident that his preparation has been complete, and that his own self-consciousness is completely and divinely evolved—that he is the son of man and the son of God. He is Messiah and Redeemer, he is the first to evolve to the God-consciousness and able to speak, as one having authority, the truth that shall make men free.

The day of the old dispensation has passed and the day of the new dispensation has dawned. He who found the way, by the natural force of love experienced in that finding, becomes the supreme leader of other men into that way. It was Origen, one of the early

Christian writers, who said: "From him there began the interweaving of divine and human nature in order that the human by communion with the divine, might rise to be divine, not in Jesus alone but in all those who not only believe but enter upon the life which Jesus taught."

Christ is the universal Divine nature in all. It is the state of God-consciousness, it is the recognition of the indwelling God. It is the realisation of this Divine life as the essence of our life, as our very life itself, and living continually in thought, and therefore in act, from this the real centre. The man Jesus becomes the Christ Jesus—truly the Messiah and the Saviour of men—by virtue of being the first to sense, to realise, and to travel the way of salvation.

"I believe," said Emerson, "in the still small voice, and that voice is the Christ within me." Man is eternally one with the Divine source of all life. Jesus realising this in its completeness said, and said most truly, "I and my Father are one." In life, in love, in power, our true being is perfect. As we comprehend the real meaning of this and through the joint agencies of desire and will we live life from its true Centre, we are led into an appreciation of the wonderful possibilities of human life here and now.

It was the truly inspired philosopher Hegel who said, "All that has value to men, the eternal, the self-existent, is contained in man himself and has to develop from within himself." This was essentially the teaching of Jesus.

V

HIS RELATIONS WITH THE FATHER—HUMAN OR DIVINE? WHAT HE SAYS REGARDING THIS, AND OF HIS UNUSUAL INSIGHT AND POWERS: HIS TEACHING REGARDING ALL OTHERS IN THIS CONNECTION

This supreme knowledge of the things of the Spirit on the part of Jesus was so great, and he lived in such constant and such complete consciousness of the oneness of his life with the life of the Father, that we are apt, and naturally, to make the mistake that has been so often made, of interpreting him as identifying himself *in substance* with the Father, which he evidently never did and which he continually disclaimed. It was not so in the thought of his disciples and of his immediate hearers, although his sayings were at times hard for them to understand, so hard that he felt called upon many times to chide them for taking his sayings in a material sense, when his whole intention was that they be taken in a spiritual, interior sense.

There was never any thought on their part

that he was God. The fact that he refers so many times to God as the Father of his disciples and as the Father of all other men, the same as being his own Father, made it clear to them, as it should to us, that his oneness was a moral union, a union in aims and in character, and not a union in any metaphysical sense. The stories of his infancy, written many decades after his death, were intended to explain his unique personality as miraculous. The opening chapters of Matthew and of Luke both contain such accounts. We find no such account in Mark, from which these two were primarily taken, and which is the account nearest to Jesus' time.

Moreover, as he never alluded even once, so far as we have any account, to any miraculous circumstances attending his birth, and therefore his life, he apparently knew nothing of them whatever. And since he had the same struggles and temptations as we have, since his every teaching was—as I am so ye shall be,—we can see how tremendously significant becomes his unique individuality and personality in example.

Of any peculiarity of birth, then, his disciples apparently knew nothing, or any of his hearers. He was regarded by all of his time as the son of Joseph and of Mary, the same as were his four brothers and his sisters—the

children of poor but greatly respected Jewish parents. Even they apparently knew nothing of any peculiarity of his birth, although they were plainly conscious of a peculiarity of his tendencies and his character. He, therefore, evidently came to his disciples without any advantages other than those of his own superior mind and heart, and it was these that made them recognise him as master and they as disciples; he as teacher and they as co-workers.

These were also the characteristics that gave him his power over men, and that made him speak as one having authority to all those who gathered around to hear him during his upwards of two years of public ministry. Although he constantly uses terms that indicate his perfect moral union with the Father, he continually strives to make it plain that this union has come about *through his humanity.* His will, he tells us, is always distinct from God's will, though never opposed to God's will—"I can of myself do nothing: as I hear I judge: and my judgment is righteous; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." "And he that sent me is with me; he hath not left me alone; for I do always the things that are pleasing to him." He continually prays to God. He says at one time: "Ye seek to kill me, a man that hath

told you the truth." Again, as indicated above, he says that the very reason why Messianic or superior judgment is given him is because he is the "Son of man." He indicates his oneness with his own people, the Jews, as one of those who knew what they worship. These and many other instances indicate how clearly he recognised and regarded himself as a human being, but *one with a Supreme God-consciousness.*

Twice certain ones of the Jews accused him of claiming to be God—and it was a blasphemous claim in their eyes. In one case, by his reply, he indicated his sense of complete dependence upon God. He continually asserts this complete dependence upon God, but gives as the reason for his superior knowledge of God, and his unique relationship with the Father, his supreme desire to do continually the will of the Father.

The reason he states as to why the Father is continually with him, directing him and sustaining him, and giving him power to do the things that he does, is that the Father loves him, and that he always does the things which are pleasing to the Father. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love," he tells his disciples. It would seem almost inconceivable

that words so plain could be so twisted as to mean that the Father abides in him and directs him because he is of the same substance as the Father. His complete dependence for guidance in all the acts of his daily life upon the Father, is illustrated by his own words again and again.

He alludes again and again to his moral union with the Father, brought about by the action of his desire and his will, but he nowhere makes claim or even allusion to any metaphysical relationship. The following are the words of an eminent American Bible scholar in connection with a study of the sayings of Jesus as portrayed in the fourth Gospel:* "We conclude, therefore, that the oneness of Jesus with the Father, as far as we can learn from His words in the fourth Gospel, is a oneness of character. He was perfectly obedient to the Father, and so His will was the Father's will manifested in the flesh. They who heard His words, heard the thought of the Father perfectly transmitted. They who felt His love, felt the love of the Father in its most appreciable, because human, form. They who submitted to His will, thereby became submissive to the will of the Father. They who felt themselves quickened under His gracious

* "The Revelation of Jesus," by George Holley Gilbert, Ph.D., D.D. The Macmillan Co.

influence, were quickened by the power of the Father in the form of its highest potency." Again he says: "It may be remarked, in conclusion, that this interpretation is in harmony with the expressed purpose of the evangelist, which was to prove that Jesus was the Christ (John xx, 31). He does not set out to prove that Jesus is of the same *nature* as the Father but to prove that He is the one anointed of the Father to give eternal life to men. Therefore, he appropriately closes his Gospel with the scene in which Thomas adores the Messiah.

"This interpretation is also in harmony with the fact of the human consciousness of Jesus, which is evidenced throughout the entire Gospel; in harmony with the fact of Jesus' consciousness of absolute moral union with the Father, which is manifest throughout the entire Gospel—a consciousness that uttered itself in such a word as 'I and the Father are one'; and it is in harmony, finally, with the fact of his Messianic consciousness. Jesus as the Messiah is the perfect revealer of the Father, the perfect representative of the Father, the perfect redeemer of those who accept Him, and He is therefore infinitely worthy of the adoration and worship of all mankind."

When Jesus uses the expression, "The Father in me and I in the Father," and "he that

beholdeth me beholdeth him that sent me," it is clearly evident that he means that he is a perfect revealer of the Father, in character and in action. Seeing the Father cannot possibly refer to seeing *in the physical, material sense;* for his uniform teaching in this respect is that God is Spirit, he is, therefore, not to be seen in the material sense. He is to be known only by being perceived through the channel of the Spirit, the inner consciousness.

We can know God only through spiritual apprehension. And herein lies Jesus' claim to Messiahship—a man that has told you the truth, he says of himself, has realised so completely and supremely his oneness with the Divine life and power, that he makes thereafter the sole purpose and object of his life that of a teacher, a leader of other men into this same wonderful life. Herein lies his sole claim to Messiahship. The *Christ* had arisen to full consciousness within him, it had assumed the ascendency in his life, and his one desire and passion thereafter was that of service—to lead others to a perfect realisation of the Christ within.

While God is the Father of all, the same as of himself, *men become sons,* he teaches, and herein lies salvation. It is the lifting of a man's mind up from the material, physical, and the transient, to a realisation of his life as one

with the Eternal Spirit. It was that men be led to a knowledge of this life and this power, as the Source of their life and their power, and to identify themselves always actively with it, that Jesus made his ceaseless task. Concerning the expression so continually on his lips, The Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven—It is within you, he said. It cometh not with observation. It is an invisible, interior, spiritual reality. It is the Divine rule, the rule of the spirit of omnipotent creative Spirit in the heart of man.

It is *present,* and *becomes active in its operations,* in your life, the moment that you realise and acknowledge it. God has done his part; man through the channel of his mind and his inner consciousness must do his part. Divine self-realisation will make active eternally latent possibilities and powers whereby we become co-operators with God, for truly, in him we live, move, and have our being. The one God and Father of all, who is above all, and in you all. It is indeed a new life, or birth into a new life; it is conversion and redemption combined, if you please, the moment any soul realises this one great central truth that Jesus brought within the realm of human knowledge and experience.

It was Emerson who said, "Every Soul is not only the inlet but may become the outlet

of all there is in God." It was the great Jewish thinker, Spinoza, the lens-grinder, born in Holland, 1632, of whom Heine once wittily said that all our modern philosophers see through the glasses which Baruch Spinoza ground, who said: "There is a universal substance which is God, the *causa immanens,* not the *causa transiens.* This is the origin of all things, the all-pervading force diffused throughout the universe, 'the one eternal unity.' This eternal and universal substance consists of an infinite number of attributes, each one expressing eternal and infinite being. The human mind itself is part of the infinite mind of God." *

Almost identical with the thought of Spinoza is that of Father Tyrrell, when in his last book he says, "Union with God is union with the Divine life and action, with the undisturbed centre of the cyclone." The following, the ripest life thought of a recent writer, is to me most significant: † "Christ came the first time

* "We adhere firmly," says Ernst Haeckel, in "The Riddle of the Universe," "to the pure, unequivocal monism of Spinoza: Matter or infinitely extended substance, and spirit (or energy), or sensitive and thinking substance, are the two fundamental attributes or principal properties of the all-embracing divine essence of the world, the universal substance."

† I. K. Funk, D.D., LL.D., "The Next Step in Evolution."

into men's vision by coming on the plane of their senses; He comes the second time into men's vision by lifting men up to His plane of spiritual comprehension. This coming of Christ involves a new birth, a new creation, a new kingdom. It means a new step in the evolution of man. . . . Now he steps from the kingdom of the natural man to the kingdom of the spiritual man, every portion of this step a natural process subject to critical scientific analysis if that analysis goes deep enough, wide enough, far enough. . . . Many times, and in many ways, He declares, I am 'from above.' He is born a natural man, and yet possesses the life of the kingdom next higher, and proceeds to lift the natural man by a new birth into the kingdom of the spiritual man. He is born the son of man and the Son of God, bridging the chasm with his own being. . . . And so, the Christ life takes the character, the soul, the spirit of the natural man, which have developed through the ages—takes them through a new birth, this time with man's consent. 'Marvel not that I say unto you, Ye must be born again,' 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' . . .

"The new birth of the natural man into the kingdom of the spiritual man, the reborning of

his personality, making him a child of God after the type of Christ, is the tap-root of Christianity, is the chief artery. Cut that and all is gone. Keep that and let the 'new creature' grow toward his fulness, then Christ is recreated, reincarnated in him, and through him He is manifest again among men."

Back of all modern idealistic philosophy foreshadowing what great minds would eventually deduce through the processes of research and of reason, stands the Galilean Teacher, formulating a world ethic and a world religion through the processes of direct consciousness, by choosing so to order his life that these revelations of the inner life and consciousness might be revealed clearly and unmistakably to him. The truth that he perceived, and therefore the discovery that he made and presented so simply and so persuasively to the world, was the fact that the human and the Divine are the two phases of the same great order of being, to be personified in man at his highest. There is that in God that manifests itself as, and that therefore becomes, human. There is that in man that is divine and that awaits only his recognition to manifest itself as divine.

The divine essence, the divine Centre of life, came to Jesus as "Father," and to him the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven took the form of a filial relationship between

man and God. It was this indwelling divine life, this "Father in me," to which he ascribed all of his wonderful knowledge and all of his wonderful works. The Father manifested himself in him because he always tried to do the will of the Father. He thereby made the conditions whereby the Divine could manifest, speak through, and work through the human. Although the Kingdom of God was for him an invisible spiritual kingdom or state, it nevertheless was a state that was to hold and to condition all outward and material aspects or phases of life, and herein lay its great dynamic force. Herein lay the reason that in importance it preceded everything else. Herein lay the reason for his injunction, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." He was thereby simply enunciating the law of cause and effect through which the Eternal Energy unceasingly works. He had discovered, so to speak, a faculty or a department of the human mind, whereby it can make itself open and sensitive to the leadings of the higher divine mind, so that it can become a channel for the inspirations and the leadings of this mind.

The Infinite divine mind is the source of all higher wisdom and power. Do away with the sense of separateness of your life and the eter-

nal divine life, and you make the conditions such that this higher intelligence manifests more fully to and through you. Do away with this sense of separateness and thereby remove limitations, so that the divine power, which is the one creative power, may manifest through you in a less trammelled manner.

The divine mind is perfect and it gives perfect expression in form. Realising it as the real creative mind in us, will give abounding health and strength to physical form—the physical body—in the degree that it is untrammelled and free to do so. The inner life-force builds always healthfully unless too much interfered with.

It can be interfered with through the violation of mental law, or through the violation of physical law, and either consciously or unconsciously. In the case of the former, it is through the channel of the subconscious mind. In the case of the latter it is through the channel of natural law. The great secret of healthy body-building or of healthy rebuilding, is to know how, through the action of the conscious thinking mind, to relate the subconscious mind which has charge of the bodily functions and operations and also of all cell-building, to the superconscious mind—the divine mind within us—that this higher mind may impress it with its own perfection in form. This means the

raising of all building operations to their highest potency.

The subconscious mind is wonderfully exact in its workings, and it is marvellously responsive to the active thinking mind. To see one's self growing healthfully, to think and to image health and wholeness, instead of disease, to live chronically in the mental attitude of faith and hope and courage, instead of fear, pessimism and cynicism, creates healthy cell tissue and wholeness of body.

To live in thoughts of love, sympathy, goodwill, and service for all of one's neighbours and for all people, instead of with thoughts of hatred or envy or jealousy, means building for health and for wholeness instead of weakness and disease. As is the mind and spirit so inevitably in time will become the body. As is the inner, which is the realm of cause, so always and inevitably will become the outer, which is the realm of effect.

As God is still creating and building in the world to-day, the same, exactly the same, as he has always done, so we, by gaining a knowledge of the laws through which he works, can build our own world harmoniously and as may be desired. This is true, not only of the body, but of all phases and conditions of life. Jesus, through his wonderful innate perception of spiritual truth, anticipated, and with wonder-

ful accuracy, by many centuries, great laws of biology and of psychology that we by the slower processes of experimentation have been discovering only during the past few years.

He was not able to anticipate, or at least he did not anticipate, the great facts and findings in science that the modern world is in possession of, but this may be because he was not so interested in, or so concerned with them. His great interest was the minds, the souls, and the bodies of men, and after all, in whatever light we may view it, this is the chief thing. It was Immanuel Kant who said long ago, "There is nothing great in the world but man, and nothing great in man but his soul." And with a greater knowledge of the effects and the operations of mental and emotional states, he might have added—and as is the soul so is the body, or so will the body become.

Another fact that Jesus had a clear knowledge of, was the fact that thoughts are forces and also of the law of their working, which is that like builds like, and that like attracts like. The fact of his wonderful powers of healing would seem to be based wholly upon this assumption, at least if the chroniclers are trustworthy in their statements as to why he could do his remarkable works of healing in some places and not in others. Contrary to the thoughts of some, that the unusual accomplish-

ment is through the violation or the disregard of natural law or of spiritual law, and for which the term miracle is used, it was on account of his *supreme understanding of law,* that Jesus was enabled to do the works which those of lesser understanding could regard only as miracles.

Many things that in Jesus' time, and even in centuries subsequent to his time, were regarded as miracles, have become the commonplace of to-day. That is the reason why early man explained so many things through the avenue of myth and mythology; he had not yet found the laws whereby they occurred. Jesus understood the power of mind. By his keen perceptive faculties, he understood clearly the law of suggestion, or as it is termed by modern psychologists, "mental suggestion." It is the law whereby one mind, without the aid of the written or the spoken word, can impress itself upon the subconscious mind of another. Similar to a law of our modern wireless telegraphy, it depends for its effectiveness upon how nearly the minds of the two are attuned one to another, and also upon the power of the active mind in the transaction in concentration or thought-focusing. It also depends for its effectiveness upon the ability of the one using this agency to reach and to impress the higher realms of the subconscious mind of the

other. Jesus' understanding of the law in this respect, was well-nigh complete.

There are several cases recorded where the healing was effected, not in the immediate presence of the one healed, and therefore not with the mental co-operation of that one. In most all cases, however, he *sought* the co-operation of the ones he would heal; this was through the arousing of a mental and thereby a spiritual activity on their part, which took the form of faith. Faith is the focusing of the thought forces upon the accomplishment of a certain object, with firm and constant expectation as to its fulfilment. Through this aid he was able to arouse into supreme activity the inner subconscious mind of the patient. In the degree that he was able successfully to do this, the healing process was instantaneous.

There were certain centres, according to the accounts given, where by reason of the antagonism to him, and on account of the lack of this contributing agency, he was not able to do any works of healing. A man cannot be healed contrary to his desires or his will, the same as God cannot draw a man into his kingdom, whereby the reign of the higher understanding and the use of the higher powers become dominant in his life, contrary to his desires or against his will. God works only through law, and the reign of law is supreme.

It is only during the last half-century or so, beginning with the advent of Dr. Quimby, in Maine, that we have come into a wider knowledge of, and a wider intelligent use of, these same forces as therapeutic agents. And to-day multitudes of people every year are attesting the efficiency of mental and spiritual healing. One thing stands out pre-eminently, the same as it did in Jesus' day—the higher the life the more efficient he or she becomes in the mastery of and in the use of these agencies in healing, and the more fully they are able to eliminate the element of time.

There is scarcely an intelligent physician in the world to-day who does not recognise and who does not attest the great therapeutic value of these mental and spiritual agencies. Many are studying the laws of their operation, and are using them in their regular practice. Many are seeking the help of, and are calling to their aid in some of their cases, those who have made this field their special study and practice. Jesus sometimes used the expression, Thy sins—or thy errors—be forgiven thee, thereby recognising as we recognise so fully to-day that all disease is through the violation of law. It is not God-constituted; it results through a failure to recognise, consciously or unconsciously, intentionally or unintentionally, the fixed and

never to be evaded laws that God has constituted, or rather, that he has instituted. No healing can come about, therefore, and no healing, however it may come about, can be permanent, until the violation of the law ceases.

In this connection it is also well to remember that moderation is one of the established laws of life. Excesses have to be paid for with many and sometimes with frightful costs. The higher we ascend to the upper stories of our being, which is but another way of saying, the more quickly and the more fully we seek and enter the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, whereby the laws of right living are more clearly perceived by us, the keener are our enjoyments, and the more lasting and the more satisfying are our pleasures. The less are the after-kicks, and the less are the penalties that come haltingly limping up in the rear, that we have to stop and take aboard, and that we sometimes have to nurse and care for for a long time.

So abounding is the health, so transcendent are the joys and satisfactions when one seeks and enters this kingdom, this kingdom of divine self-realisation, this life under the guidance of the Spirit, that Jesus taught it as the supreme thing in life, compared to which all other apparent gains were as nothing. To teaching it

to other men that they might share in its joys he gave the best endeavours of his life.

He said that the realisation of or the establishment of this relationship, was like a merchant seeking goodly pearls, and having found one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. It is the one all-inclusive thing. It is so valuable that it is like finding a great treasure hidden in a field, of which heretofore we have known nothing. That treasure can be made to buy all other things. He said it is like the tiny grain of mustard seed which, though exceedingly small at first, grows into a tree. It is, he said, like leaven; it will permeate and will raise to a higher level and to a more usable form every phase and faculty of man's being.

It begins small, you make your choice, you place yourself voluntarily in definite relationship with this power within. The higher wisdom begins to lead, and makes its leadings clearer day by day. We grow daily in the power of realising and of following it. It becomes in time supreme, and leads on always to the highest good.

It becomes the chief factor, the eternal factor of life, leading us always in the path of the higher good here, and imbuing us with faith in the fact that life is eternally progressive, and exactly as we make life here, will it be

for us in the hereafter. We thus make, and we thus decide, our own heaven or our own hell, both here and hereafter. Both are states or conditions of life, and the only heaven or the only hell that one will ever have is that of his own choice, and therefore that of his own making. God would not be God, and law would not be law, were it otherwise.

VI

JESUS' TEACHINGS REGARDING SIN AND "THE SINNER" AND GOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEM: DID HE TEACH THE DEPRAVITY—THE FALL— OF MAN, OR THE ESSENTIAL DIVINITY OF MAN?

This is one of the great supplementary teachings of Jesus. This is one of his great gifts to mankind, and this is what he so clearly taught through the medium of one of his two greatest parables, the parable of the Lost Son. It might be termed the parable of the wandering son, and it could then be paraphrased the parable of the wandering soul. We listen to priest and to preacher in their expositions of those portions of ancient creeds, still preserved, that affirm the natural depravity and the lost estate of man. This is still one of the fundamentals of every one in existence to-day. Our twentieth-century knowledge and our twentieth-century mentalities make it utterly impossible for us to give credence to this the same as to some

other fundamentals, as did our forefathers of generations ago. To take the direct teachings of the supreme spiritual teacher of all time, who claimed such unusual knowledge of God, and whose life gave evidence of such knowledge, seems to me far more authoritative and more thoroughly common-sense.

The parable of the Lost Son is Jesus' teaching of the breaking and the renewal of man's relation to God, and the way both are brought about. It is preceded immediately by the parable of the lost coin, which makes it additionally clear that the problem of sin and the condition of the sinner are what Jesus distinctly had in mind. It is brief and clear-cut: "Either what woman, having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." The parable of the Lost Son contains such a vitally important part of Jesus' entire teachings, both as to his teachings of the nature of God and of God's relation to sin and to what we term the sinner, that it is well to have it fresh in mind.

In simplicity of form, conciseness of expression, and its inclusive scope, it reminds me many times of Lincoln's Gettysburg address:

"A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth *to me.* And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey to a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and came to his father.

"But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell upon his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned

against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him, and he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

In the son's father, Jesus represents God the Heavenly Father. He grants full pardon without any condition, purely out of his abounding love to the one who voluntarily turns to him and whose desire is finally to live in the realm of his love and his guidance, and therefore to do his will. It is in such thorough keeping with Jesus' entire teachings concerning God, that God is Love.

The son in time "came to himself" after living for a period in the pigsty state of existence. In his longing for his own individual experience of pleasures, he found the satiety which always and inevitably results in the pursuit of pleasure from the physical alone, and his life became thoroughly unsatisfactory. It was leading him to physical suffering and degradation, perhaps, the same as it was leading him to mental degradation. He became conscious of the tremendous losses he was sustaining through this mode of living.

He was willing, he was more than willing, he was glad, to heed and to follow the higher leading within him, the promptings of his higher self. The Christ within urged and pleaded and conquered, and he straightway arose and said, I will go to my father. His will plucked up, it sustained his desire, and he went to his father. His father's heart went out to him instantaneously—it could not be otherwise

from his very nature, according to the Master's teaching.

So rejoiced was he, by the simple fact of knowing that the child who had been lost to him, had voluntarily returned, that the instant he had knowledge of his coming, he went out to meet and to greet him. He kissed him fervently, he gave him the glad heart and a glad hand, and he rejoiced that it was so. He did not enter into any dogmatic or any ecclesiastical disquisition with him, in regard to the fact that he had left him, that he had dishonoured him, that he had spent his substance. He said nothing in regard to his intense anger in that a son of his should do this, and commit such a grievous series of sins—nor did he say anything about some far-away ancestor that had sinned, and of his son's being in a degraded and lost state on account of the mistakes of this far-away ancestor.

He imposed no conditions whatever for the granting of his full pardon. There was nothing that the son could do more than he had done. He did not say, Of course, son, I am glad to see you back, but you have outraged my sense of honour and therefore, as an angry father, I cannot restore you to your own, unless some propitiation be made by you.

He did not impose any terms of probation by telling him that he would have to stay around

and work for some days or weeks in order to earn money enough to buy a sheep or a lamb of him, to be taken out on some set date to have its throat cut and to have various ceremonies observed while the flowing blood would make an atonement for the sins of the son sufficient to appease the anger of the father, that he might receive him again to himself and in full favour. *This might well have been,* for sacrifices and burnt offerings to God were still in vogue when Jesus came.

It was the *spirit* of *religion,* however, that Jesus came to teach and restore. Away with these things, these crude, these barbaric ideas! said he. They are not only not pleasing, but they are an abomination in the sight of the Lord, and he proceeded to tell them the things that were acceptable. His teaching here is that God is our Heavenly Father; that as an earthly father is willing to give good gifts unto his children, so God is still more willing and ready, and solely because *he loves us.* Pre-eminently and supremely God is Love.

But his teaching, just as strongly, is also that man must turn to God and must recognise him as his father, and must long for his divine reign in his thought and in his life. It involves an act of repentance on his part for his past shortcomings, while he remained outside of the Heavenly Kingdom; and then the desire

and the will to live in complete surrender and in complete accordance with the divine leadings of this eternal kingdom. Jesus not only taught that the Kingdom of Heaven is this reign of God in the heart, pushing out into all phases of life's activities; he taught also that in every human soul God has implanted an inner light that lights the way to this kingdom; that there is an inner spirit in man, continually urging him in the way of this kingdom and continually guiding him towards it.

This willingness on the part of God to pardon, this essential quality of his nature, as Jesus teaches, is not at all lessened by Jesus' one obscure word, if indeed he be correctly quoted, in regard to one sin for which there is not forgiveness—the sin against the Holy Spirit or the Holy Ghost. "And every one who shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven." And the sentence then immediately following seems to give a clear indication of what he meant by the Holy Spirit. "And when they shall bring you before the synagogues and the rulers, and the authorities, be not anxious how or what ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: for the Holy Spirit shall teach you in that very hour what ye ought to say." It is the indwelling spirit, the light that

lighteth every man that cometh into the world, that is continually urging us onward and upward, therefore Godward.

It is the voice of the higher, diviner self; we hear the voice, we heed its call, we follow the higher leading; the Christ-consciousness assumes ascendency, we have found the Kingdom of God and we dwell in the realm of his righteousness. The indwelling spirit gradually then assumes the ascendency in its guidance. We realise that the old prophet knew whereof he spoke when he said, "There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." We realise likewise the truth uttered by a later writer: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him." "And, because ye are sons God has sent forth his spirit into your hearts."

On the other hand, we can refuse to follow this inner leading, we can voluntarily choose the pigsty state of existence, thinking that along this road lies pleasure; it may for a time, but it is always the lesser compared to the greater. It is pleasure followed always by a lack of the higher satisfaction, that the reality of our nature *cannot accept as the real.* We follow it farther until we realise that we are on the wrong path in the pursuit of life and of pleasure. The degradation of mind and

body, the suffering of mind and body, the weariness of spirit bring us finally to our senses and we too arise and go to our Father.

We are created agents with a free will, and God himself cannot bring us into the kingdom, if we choose not to follow him by stifling and refusing to listen to the call of the indwelling Spirit that is the Divine in us. Undoubtedly Jesus' teaching that the greatest sin and the one sin that may not be forgiven, the denial of the Holy Spirit, is on account of the fact that for it there cannot be the excuse of ignorance.

Its leadings are implanted in each human soul, and voluntarily to crush them and deliberately to refuse to follow them involves the supreme penalty. Even here it is Jesus' teaching that God has no desire to punish, and that the only punishment there is, is that that results from the deliberate violation of his established laws, and even a sin against the Holy Spirit God is willing to pardon, but he has made man a free moral agent and he can do no more.

If man, therefore, by stifling his higher leadings, deliberately chooses and persists in following the path of sin, he must therefore bear the consequences that sin—the violation of law—entails. The Galilean Christ, he who reckoned his pedigree from the Infinite and who taught us so to reckon ours, is helping

us rid ourselves of the old barbaric idea that God punishes.

He has instituted great systems of law governing the universe about us. We term it natural or physical law. He has instituted great systems of law that govern the thoughts and the acts in the lives of men. We call it mental and moral law. We recognise these laws, we obey them, and thereby work in harmony with them. They necessarily, so to speak, work in harmony with us, rendering us only good. Through ignorance or through choice we fail to recognise them, we disobey or violate them, and pain and suffering and loss is the result. *The violation of law carries always its own penalty.*

Mind, intelligence is given us that we may discover and work in harmony with natural physical law. An indwelling spirit inherent within us, acting always through the channel of mind and intelligence, enables us to discern mental and moral law and to bring our thoughts, our acts, and, therefore, our lives into harmony with it. The more intelligent we are, the more fully we follow and obey it. God does not therefore seek man's punishment. And according to Jesus' teaching, the idea of an angry God is an anomaly.

It is supremely a world of law and order, and not of fiat or caprice. God works to-day as al-

ways through great systems of immutable law. He gives us minds and an inner light to discern, to know, and to obey these laws. Violation of law carries its own punishment. It is inherent in the law itself.

Religious teachers of the dogmatic type, religious organisations in the past and even today, of the same type, violating one of the very fundamental teachings of Jesus, seek to gain and to hold control over their adherents through the element of fear. They say that there are those who can be reached and who can be held only through fear, and they hold vast millions in their sway through this agency. It is false—it is as false as the hell that the doctrine and the acts and the practices that result from it, lead to. The fact that they endeavour to keep the real fundamental teachings of Jesus away from their people, and give them in their place primarily the formulated dogmas of early groups of men about him, indicates that they may be more interested in building up and in holding together the organisation, than they are in the real welfare of their adherents—that it is an organisation of *getting,* rather than of *giving.*

Only those who have failed utterly to grasp the spirit of the Master, the spirit of his teachings, and the whole spirit of his life, can hold such a view or can sanction such a practice.

The awful things that the use of this element of fear in the hands of a close corporation, among ignorant, superstitious, or unthinking people, has led to, is all too well known by those who are at all intimately acquainted with history. Alas, also, whatever we may want to think to the contrary, it is alive and working yet among us to-day.

When a minister of a large religious organisation, one of the anointed ones of the "Vicar of Christ on earth," will for three years pursue a widowed mother, whose only son and her sole means of support has died, to get from her every last dollar that he could get, in payment for his efforts to get the son's soul out of purgatory, we see how the element of fear kindred to that of the dark ages, used as a weapon, is still among us. The poor mother, good woman as she is, did not realise that under the law of God a mother's love for her child, and the law of love and of spirit that bind them one to another, could be far more effective in its almost infinite longing for his welfare, than any efforts of such an ecclesiastical scoundrel could ever be. Well might she realise, if her knowledge of human nature were greater, that a pious scoundrel of this type, who would take from one in actual need even a cent, even a farthing, for such a service, let alone actually pursuing her and using on

her the club of fear, not once but several times, that he might get from her all that he could, would have no inclination to give such service as he professed, or at best there would be absolutely no reliability to be placed upon him as to his giving such service.

Were this but a single or an isolated case, it would be scarcely worth the mention. Were it on the other hand the case of say a wealthy or a well-to-do person, voluntarily seeking such service, it would be different. The fact of the matter is, however, that there are thousands of such ecclesiastical scoundrels using this same club of fear on the poor, the unthinking, and the unfortunate in this and in other countries where the organisation that sanctions it is in existence.

For the actual sinner, Jesus taught that God has infinite pity and love. He taught this not only through this wonderful parable of the Lost Son, but the whole tenor of his teaching was to the effect that the *very nature* of the Heavenly Father, whose supreme characteristic is love, is to love and to draw his children to him, even when they have erred and sinned. The spirit of his entire teaching was that God is a God of Infinite Love, and to draw the minds of the people away from a God of anger as now and then cropped out throughout the old dispensation, he ceaselessly strove.

But for those who in the name of, and under the cloak of religion, seek their own ends or even the ends of an organisation, he had only denunciation and condemnation, the most scathing of which we have any record. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." And again, "Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, and the chief seats in the Synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation."

This action on Jesus' part, this scathing denunciation was equalled by only one other. It related to those who formulated strict religious or ecclesiastical doctrines, and who tried through their interpretation and through their every act, to bind the conscience of men to them, in distinction from the great message that he brought and taught, that the kingdom of God is within, that the essence of all religion is this personal reign of God

in the individual soul, that a man's religion is a matter *between himself and his God.*

It is the distinction between the priest and the prophet. The priest, who has taken the place of the scribe, is interested primarily in ecclesiasticism, in preserving and in strengthening the dogmas of the organisation. He and his kind are ever the persecutors of the prophet type, that that Jesus so supremely represented. They are the same as those that finally killed him, the same as would kill him to-day if he interfered too much with their formulated system—*if they could.*

They condemned to death, and in their naïve simplicity, to eternal damnation, hundreds of his prophets and thousands, hundreds of thousands of his splendid, earnest followers, whose sole offence was a determination to follow him in his teaching—that the source of inspiration, or religion, and of life was within, and that each in his own way must be true to his God, by worshipping and serving his God according to the leadings of his own conscience.

It is, of course, but just to say that the mixture of statecraft with religion, of religion with statecraft, the rivalries for power on the part of each, the intrigue, the plot and the counterplot on the part of each, in their strug-

gles for worldly power and aggrandisement, had a great deal to do with this. Unfortunately, however, even to-day, this is not at an end.

It behooves those of the prophet class, those who care more for the souls and the welfare of men than for their own standing or for the welfare of any organisation, to be awake, to be doubly armed with the power of the Spirit, that each new word and revelation of God made possible and forevermore more easy by the Galilean Prophet and Saviour, may be given back with persuasiveness and with power and with a clear-cut distinctness to the people.

Hear Jesus' words. How aptly they seem to apply to the various periods of history between his time and our time. What a homely and familiar application they somehow seem to have almost to-day: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in *yourselves,* neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. . . . Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets." These lines from

his splendid poem—"Prophets"—by Ernest Crosby, hold an eternal truth:*

"Happy the land that knoweth its prophets before they die!
Happy the land that doth not revile and persecute them during their lives!
Was there ever such a land?
We are engaged in the ancient pastime—
Building the monuments of the prophets of old,
And casting stones at the seers whom we meet in the streets.
In the world's market one dead prophet is worth a dozen of the living.
Happy the land that knoweth its prophets before they die!

. . . . .

And there are prophets to-day, though the world passes them by unheeding.
Their race is not extinct, and will not be until we settle down to death.
To them is confided the life of the world.
On the bold startling lines they lay down, the living structure of the future will grow;
The nerve-like shapes which they trace in the amorphous and distorted mass of society

*From "Plain Talk in Psalm and Parable," by Ernest Crosby. Small, Maynard & Company, Boston.

will by and by be centres of visible life,
and take on flesh and blood.

. . . . .

Happy the land that knoweth its prophets
before they die!"

VII

JESUS' OWN STATEMENT OF THE ESSENCE OF RELIGION—HIS OWN DESIGNATION OF THE HEART OF CHRISTIANITY

In addition to Jesus' injunction of love to God, which he amplified as synonymous with the Kingdom of God,—the Divine rule, the rule of God in the mind and heart, outflowing into all of the activities of the daily life—his other equally important injunction of love for man, whom he designated by the term neighbour, was given concrete illustration to by that other marvellous parable, answering the question, "Who is my neighbour?" The parable of the Good Samaritan contains Jesus' clear-cut and marvellously expressed answer to the question of love to the brother. This parable and the parable of the Lost Son, taken in conjunction with Jesus' clear-cut answer to the question of the lawyer containing his summary of all religion, contains, we might say, the *Christian Religion.*

The parable of the Good Samaritan—may it forever have a diviner meaning for and a diviner power over us: "A certain man went

down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said to him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour to him that fell among the thieves?"

So plain has Jesus made his meaning in this brief and homely story, that comment upon it seems hardly necessary. So opportune, however, are the following words by a well-known American minister and writer, that I am yielding to the impulse to reproduce them here.* "In answering this ques-

* "Religion and Life," by Elwood Worcester. Harper Brothers, New York.

tion, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus did not trouble himself with the idle query whether it is possible to love another as we love ourselves, but he laid his finger on one of the noblest traits of human nature which he intended to use as a mainspring of his religion. . . . I suppose and I fear that Jesus aimed a frightful sarcasm at the clergy and the sacerdotal order when he represented the priest and the Levite as calmly going by on the other side, leaving the wounded man bleeding on the ground. But this is perfectly evident: no task and no business in life is important enough or exacting enough to save us from the duty of succouring men and women in distress or from performing those elementary duties of kindness and compassion which are presented to us every day. This is the great commandment of the law, and it is so great that, if broken, the keeping of the other commandments is of no account. . . .

"No doubt the priest and the Levite had duties to perform, and probably they were religious duties. Very likely the priest was going down to Jericho to preach to the inhabitants of that wicked city on the error of their ways and the Levite was going with him to read the lesson. We instinctively feel that the passing by of the wounded man

rendered that service of no account, and we cannot help wondering what the priest preached about that morning—probably a sermon on the discipline and rites of the Church, or on the frame of mind one should be in on the seventeenth Sunday after Trinity. There is a very mischievous little beast called the praying mantis. He looks very devout, a very paragon of insects for piety. His arms are ever folded, and his head bowed as if in prayer; but let another insect trust these appearances to approach him, and he becomes a spectre to affright, and his revenge is like the tiger's spring. There are many praying mantises in the world. Some assume that posture to leap upon their prey. Others are so sunk in their reverie that they perceive not when men are perishing."

Yes, the neighbour is not only the one living in the same house, in the same block, in the same street or village. It is any one in the world with whom we come in contact—any one who crosses our path, whatever his condition, station, or equipment. Wherever there is a call for service, we fail in doing our duty when we fail in responding to that call for service.

This leads us to the very heart of Jesus' teachings, to the very heart of religion, to the very heart of Christianity—that is, the

Christianity that is of the Christ. It is Jesus' own summary of religion. It is the condensed statement of all that he taught. It contains his complete revelation to man. We have already alluded to it. To refer to it again, as given in the words of another recorder, will not be amiss because it is so essentially fundamental. On one occasion Jesus said: "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: for I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." And to have one of the most salient of questions pertaining to religion and to life answered, and answered in a clear-cut manner by the great Spiritual Teacher of all times, is a privilege indeed.

A lawyer, a teacher of religion, or rather an interpreter of the then prevailing religion, put to him a most vital question. It was none other than—"Which is the greatest of all commandments?" Realising as we do that the commandments and the law given by the prophets, and formulated by them into a system, was their religion or at least their conception of religion, his question virtually amounted to this—Master, what is really the heart or the substance of religion? It was a unique question and it gave opportunity for a

unique reply. The answer was not only unique but more than unique. It constituted, as after eighteen hundred years we are just beginning to realise, and as we are yet destined fully to realise, the greatest statement in the world's history. "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment."

It is the same teaching that he announced at the very beginning of his ministry. Love for the good—a supreme desire for the Divine reign—for the reign of God in the mind and heart and life, and therefore the following of the leadings of the Holy Spirit that directs every human soul who longs for such direction and who shows the disposition to follow it. Jesus' knowledge of human nature was so comprehensive, and his knowledge of the liability of error in human deduction was so keen, however, that immediately he added—"And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. There is none other commandment greater than these."

The very foundation, then, of all of the Christ's teachings, and therefore of true

Christianity, is love. There are those who say that Jesus' statement had to do with the old dispensation—the law, the prophets, the commandments. True, but he distinctly stated that he came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them. His purpose was to supplement the law and the prophets, and it took the form of an all-embracing spirit, so to speak.

It was the passing on from the mere verbal element, the letter, in religion, to the real spirit in religion, in life, in conduct, and this is the sole significance of the new dispensation. This is what constitutes him the Supreme Teacher. Hear him in these words: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thy enemy, but I say unto you, Love your enemy, love them that curse you; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." Were it not for Jesus' teaching of the essential divinity of every human soul, and the corollary of this, that one life is different from another life only on account of a difference in divine self-realisation at any particular period or time, this teaching of his would be well-nigh incomprehensible.

His injunction—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself—may seem to many a hard saying and difficult to understand. If we will

go deep enough, however, we will find that it means—the God in you shall recognise and therefore shall love the God in your neighbour. Your source, your parentage, is identical—the Divine Father and Source of all. It is Jesus', Our Father in Heaven, or, Our Heavenly Father. We not only can love, but we must love, this divine image, this real self in every man whatever his limitation and his errors and his outward modes of expression at any particular time.

He is on the way to something higher—as we are on the way to something higher. He acts at times through selfish motives, but this is purely on account of his ignorance, the same as in other ways we act from selfish motives, and this is purely on account of our ignorance. The better we understand the reality of our being, and therefore the wiser we become, the more quickly and the more fully we depart from the selfish motive and from the selfish course of action. We thought to gain by it. We find, in reality, that we lose by it. When Jesus pointed out to us this higher law, this law of love for hate, he brought to us the knowledge of a law that would not only serve our neighbour, but a law that would serve ourselves still more. In so doing he but anticipated some great psychological, and some great biological laws and forces, that we are just

beginning to comprehend, to get hold of, and to use, as we shall see later on.

Similar in insight and in teaching was the Buddha, he who was so close to Jesus in so many ways, who upwards of five hundred years before Jesus' time taught in the same connection: "A man who foolishly does me wrong, I will return to him the protection of my ungrudging love; the more evil comes from him the more good shall go from me. Hatred does not cease by hatred ever; hatred ceases by love."

Love is a tremendous force, a tremendous power in human life. That is why Jesus so centred his whole teaching upon it. Take away the concept, the practice, and the force of love and you cut the very heart from Christianity. Jesus' authority for this is supreme. And how plainly he states it! How clearly he states it and reiterates it, so that no one of the most rudimentary intelligence, it would seem, could mistake it. "A new commandment give I you," said he, "that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." That no one can live in hate and be a follower of the Christ is set forth as follows: "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for

he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?" These are not secondary teachings. They are fundamental.

They are an integral part of the very rock foundation upon which every teaching and every act of his life rested. So clear is it, that it would seem impossible that the intricately formed schemes of Christianity and of redemption that began to take form within three hundred years of his time, and that were substituted for these teachings which he worked so hard to inculcate, could ever have taken form. Had they not taken form and had his own teachings been placed in the ascendency, the strange and inhuman things that came about as a consequence, and in direct violation of his teachings, could never have come about. They substituted strange myths and elaborately thought out theories, for his own clear-cut and simple teachings, for his own clear-cut and simple life. They tore down the foundation which he builded with infinite patience and love—they constructed—they didn't build —but they constructed another foundation gathered from many quarters, and upon it they proceeded to build an institution. Growing stronger and bolder, they said—Here is your creed, and cursed be ye if you don't accept it. The institution became of greater importance

than the truth which it was supposed to enshrine. They then through long centuries proceeded to hate, to scheme, to gain advantage over one another; when at times they could bury their own differences sufficiently—they proceeded to curse—to damn and finally to murder, not scores, but thousands and hundreds of thousands of those who had grasped so much more fully the real spirit and the real message of the Divine Teacher, that their intelligence and their conscience would not permit them to subscribe or to give allegiance to those things that they felt were foolish and false and at times directly contrary to the teachings of the Master.

What we term the Christian world was woefully retarded through all the centuries on account of this; and we to-day are far below what we might be. Century succeeding century, has placed a series of mile-stones, or of epoch-stones, marking the gradual advance of man away from a world and a universe of myth, of fiat, of caprice, and of authority, exercised through the medium of blind faith driven by fear, to a world and a universe of law and order, wherein rules with absolute precision the law of cause and effect.

The last fifty years have given us possession of such laws and such knowledge as makes our world entirely different from the world of any

that have gone before us. Where authority was blindly followed and even unquestioned, we now ask to see authority's credentials. Where it can't produce them, authority ceases.

This is nowhere more marked, perhaps, than in the realm of religion, or rather in the realm of organised religion. Where they have been refused, or where they have not stood the test, and have been therefore unsatisfactory, millions of thinking men and women have said—I'm sorry, but you will have to count me out, for I have something truer and better. More light on the way that authority was gained has enabled and is enabling men and women of determined purpose to say this without the slightest hesitation and without compunction.

We scarcely realise as yet what this is meaning for Christianity. It means that thinking men and women are going directly to the source, and they are studying the life and the teachings of God's Messenger for themselves. They are making their own deductions, and they are determined to make them untrammelled, and in the light of modern knowledge. Practically without exception it can be truthfully said, they are finding themselves gainers thereby.

Whether we realise it yet or not, a new religion is being deduced and formulated from

the original source. It is the religion of the Spirit, in distinction from the religion of dogma —it is the Christianism of the Christ. When we thus set about in an earnest way to study his own teachings, clarified so wonderfully as they are many times by the acts and the practices of his life, we find many things that the old Christianity failed to give us, while on the other hand we fail to find some things that were perhaps honestly believed as there.

When we get into the real spirit of his teachings, and the spirit of his life, we discover a certain freshness and vigour and an all-prevailing simplicity that we never dreamed were there. We find nothing of the fall and the degradation of man—nothing of the doctrine of original sin, which makes the individual man forever displeasing and lost to God's favour, until some atonement is made for his inherited sin. The wonderful story of the Lost Son, which Jesus uses to teach exactly the opposite of this, makes such a belief as this forever impossible for us again.

Follow him in his teachings, day after day —watch the element of human sympathy that breathes through all his words and through all his acts, in connection with all with whom he came in contact. Recall his eager readiness to say—Thy sins, thy errors be forgiven thee, to the one who had

sinned and erred—man or woman. Notice his eagerness to point that one to the way whereby the reign of God might become supreme in the mind and heart and life, so that the desire for sin with its penalties would fall away.

Notice how he calls the little children about him. How he welcomes them and loves them. Notice him as he takes them in his arms, and turns to his disciples and tells them that they must become as little children, "For of such is the Kingdom of God." That does not look as if he thought they were so degraded, so irretrievably lost as the theologians and the creed-makers made out, and that they influenced vast millions before us into believing.

It scarcely looks as if he thought that when a child is born, the mother would have to flee with it like a wild thing, to an altar, or to a church, or a cathedral, to have it baptised and to have a priest mumble something over it before, by any chance, it should die and its soul be irretrievably lost. One can hardly get sanction from this, or from the whole tone and tenor of the teachings of his life, for the custom that prevailed even in the early days of our own country—that of burying unbaptised children in a far-off corner of the cemetery, alone and by themselves, so that they might not contaminate the ground where the more fortunate

ones, the baptised children and others, were buried.

Calvin and Augustine, good and earnest men as they were in many ways, evolved an intricate theory in connection with God and his plan in their speculations and doctrines of total depravity and of original sin. But they surely never got it from Jesus. They fashioned a wonderful weapon to be used by the organisation upon the minds and the imaginations of men. It has been productive of rivers of tears, of oceans of blood, of millions in ecclesiastical graft; but I repeat, they never got it from the teachings of Jesus.

But how simple was his appeal as the love of God, that he sensed and taught and personified, breathed through his every word and act in connection with error and sin—in connection with the one who went wrong—in connection with the sinner. Only stop, and repent, and turn and recognise God, and let his rule, his love and his rule become dominant in your heart. Sin no more, be faithful to the higher leadings, and the Holy Spirit, the Christ within, will lead you so that you will lose the desire for sin—you will find that it doesn't pay. Its penalties are too exacting. While you are pursuing this course in your mistaken ideas and your desires for pleasure, you are missing the *far more transcendent and lasting pleasures*

that pertain to the higher realms of your being.

There was never a word about any complex scheme of salvation to be fulfilled—never a word about any sacrifice or mysterious atonement to be made, before God's scheme of justice could be satisfied and man could become a child of God. No, his whole endeavour was along the lines of pointing out how a little love of God, and the desire that his rule be made the rule of life, would make entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven and into the righteousness of God—here and hereafter.

Yes, turn and recognise God whom I reveal to you—not me, but God. Yes, recognise me, but recognise me as the revealer of God. I have found and I show you the way. I have brought my life into union, into perfect harmony with the Father's life, and what I hear I bring to you. I have found the Kingdom of God—it is within me—it is within you—it is within every human soul. It is the greatest thing there is. It can be had without money and without price. Possess it. When you possess it, you possess everything else. All else that is good follows in its train. "Whosoever drinketh of the waters that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." "I am the resur-

rection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

I am the perfect revealer of God, and what God gives me that I give to you. I am not God, but I am at one with God. Whatever I say and do, I say and do by virtue of this relationship with God. This life in God I declare unto you. So he speaks of the truth he realises and the message he brings, but so far as he personally is concerned, we find meekness and lowliness of mind always his distinguishing traits. "Why calleth thou me good? There is none good but one—that is, God."

We find, as we study him directly, no abstruse doctrine of the Trinity such as was after several centuries evolved by the creed-makers, and such as became a fundamental doctrine that must be believed by those of the Church. We find the Father—so continually spoken of by him. We find the son—the Son of man who, through his God-consciousness, through his perfect realisation of his Divine source—of the Christ within, becomes the Son of God. We find the Holy Spirit, the inner guide, through which God leads us, first, into a knowledge of the reality of our being, and when we live in the constant realisation of this reality, which becomes an authoritative guide—the higher wisdom that leads us in all of our ways.

As we thus study Jesus' own teachings, we find no mention by him of any peculiarity in connection with his birth. We find that he says that he is sent by God—"I came forth from the Father." We find that the truth that he teaches, is not his own, but that he teaches what is revealed to him by the Father. "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." We find that he came down out of Heaven; that he is from above; that he is from above and not of this world—"For I am come down from Heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."

Numbers of times Jesus makes the statement that he is sent into the world by the Father. In what is called his last prayer, he says—"As thou didst send me into the world, I also sent them into the world." He speaks here of his disciples. No stretch of the imagination would enable one to believe, however, that when he speaks thus of sending his disciples on their mission into the world, that he has any thought of their coming *from some other world* into this world. It is from his own presence that he sends them into the world to teach the things that they have learned from him. Under his influence they are prompted to go forth into the world, with his message to the world. The same as he under the divine impulse within, under the Father's guidance that he has come

so thoroughly to know, after living quietly at Nazareth for thirty years, is thus sent by the Father to declare the things made known to him by the Father.

The Scripture used the term, *heaven,* to denote the abode of God. It was the language that the people were accustomed to in connection with God and the things of God. When Jesus speaks as having come down out of heaven and as being from above, and not of this world, he illustrates again what he means as he speaks of his disciples. He says that he has given them God's word, and the world hated them, because they are not of the world, even as he is not of the world. More than once he uses this expression in regard to them. He clearly does not mean in speaking thus of his disciples that they have come from another world into this world, but that their interests are his interests—they are the things of God. As he is from above, so they are from above. It is not a reference to place; it is purely an ethical reference. It is a reference to character and to aims.

So when he speaks of his disciples as from above—the same as he is from above, he clearly can have no reference to *his origin,* any more than he would by this and similar expressions, have reference to his disciples' origin. He is actuated by the spirit of God,

not by the things that he terms the things of the world. In like manner, then, he speaks of his disciples. And when he says to certain Jews, "Ye are from beneath—I am from above," it is evident that he does not mean that they have come up from some place underneath the ground, or that he has come from some place in the sky. He speaks of them ethically the same as he speaks of himself ethically, when he uses such phrases as "come down out of heaven" and that "he is not of this world."

To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, he said to his disciples. To teach them fully concerning this Kingdom, which he spoke of always as an inner Kingdom, that they might go forth and teach the truths of the Kingdom to others, was his earnest, patient, and never-ceasing work with his disciples.

We have already referred to the fact that his revelation was so far beyond the thought of his time, that even with his disciples he had great difficulty in making his meanings, or the meanings of his teachings, clear. As he taught them, as also the people that gathered around him, great inner spiritual truths that his wonderful spiritual sense had perceived, they were continually applying to them material interpretations and material references. And how

natural this was, we can readily understand, when we recall the stratified condition of religion of the time.

In order to speak intelligibly to them—in order to make his meanings clear, he had necessarily to use the terms and the language of their common life; but how often did he have to correct them and even chide them, for interpreting his words in a purely material sense, instead of getting from them the great spiritual truths of life, and an enunciation of the great laws of life, that he strove so diligently to give them. "I am the bread of life," he said to those assembled about him; "your fathers did eat the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which cometh down out of heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the *living* bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: yea, and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world." The Jews, taking his words in a material sense, argued one with another and said: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Jesus simply reaffirmed his statement, saying: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves. . . . For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." Literally, "My flesh is the true food, and my

blood is the true drink. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he that eateth me, he shall live because of me."

And even his disciples, when they heard him speak in this way, said among themselves, "This is a hard saying; who can hear him?"— who can understand him? Jesus, quickly perceiving that they were again dragging his words down to a material interpretation, asked them if what he had just said caused them to stumble, *and then, in order that they get his real meaning,* he said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the *words* that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life."

Those to whom the dogmas of creed have been or have become stumbling-blocks, and have kept from them the joys and likewise the wonderful helps for the daily life that pertain to the true Christian life, may find a great key in this saying of Jesus. The truth that it unlocks and unfolds is that Jesus taught preeminently a Life, and also that no statement of belief about Jesus can ever constitute a man a Christian, that is, a Christian fulfilling Jesus' requirements.

A careful examination into all the leading creeds or statements of belief in vogue in

Christianism to-day, will reveal the fact that they deal almost uniformly with those things concerning which Jesus was absolutely silent, while on the other hand they contain practically none of those things that were his, *not only chief but fundamental teachings.*

Even the so-called Apostles' Creed passes almost immediately from its statement regarding his miraculous birth, to his sufferings and his death. On account of some strange absence of human reason, it passes entirely over—it omits entirely that which Jesus made the substance of his own creed—the teachings of his life, and the works of his life. Even its very opening statement we might say contains nothing that connects us in any way with Jesus—I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth. Now Jesus took it for granted that any thinking human being believes this. It was the teaching and the belief of his people for untold generations back.

As a statement it omits entirely what was to Jesus his great fundamental teaching, that that constituted his supreme revelation to man, namely, the intimate personal relations of the human spirit with the Divine spirit, its source —the intimate relations of man with God: Those wonderful filial relations that we, as children, may sustain with the Heavenly Father, that are to be as he taught, substantially

the same as the relations that he sustained to the Father, and through this, the understanding and the using of those great mystic forces that relate and that play between the infinite and the finite, when these relations are rightly made and are fully sustained. The creed never even makes mention, as practically none of them do, of that other great fundamental of Jesus' creed—our relations to, our love for our fellow-men, and the one sole test of the manifestation of that love, that of helpful service for our fellow-men.

The sole test of the Christianism that Jesus taught, lies in a definite line of action both Godward and Manward. The Christianism of Jesus does not even permit us to do the things that Jesus did, *simply because he did them.* It goes far deeper than that. It brings us into such relations with the infinite source of wisdom that the voice divine, the Holy Spirit, if you please, and to use Jesus' own term, illumines and makes clear our course of action at any and at all times, whatever the crisis that may arise.

The Christian, therefore, is not called upon to do precisely the thing that Jesus would do in precisely the same circumstances. This it would be utterly impossible to know, much less to do. The conditions of our time are in no way to be compared to the conditions of

his time; but the thing that the Christian *is* called upon to do, is so to order his thought and therefore his life in relation to the divine life and power, that he be animated and directed by the Christ spirit, in precisely the same way that Jesus was animated and directed by it. It is only thus that we fulfil his supreme test. And whichever door we open as we study directly the teachings of the Master, it opens out upon the same great plain, with the infinite horizon, Love for God, Love for our neighbour, and a love compelling sacrifice in service. It is the fatherhood of God in the way that Jesus taught it. It is the brotherhood of man in the way he taught it, and it was his life of constant sacrificing service, which was to him the path of supreme joy, to give to these a concrete expression in his own life.

Thus the Word, the Spirit of Infinite life and love, became flesh, in that it manifested itself so clearly and so perfectly in the life of the son of Joseph and of Mary, they who could but illy understand the force of his reply, when as a mere youth they chided him in that he did not follow more quickly as they were getting ready to start for home, and who made answer—"*Know ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*" Although he realised himself as the son of Joseph and Mary, after the

law of the flesh, he realised himself supremely as the son of his Heavenly Father, after the law of the Spirit. And that he brought to us the supreme revelation that the Word may become flesh in us, in the degree that we realise that *we* must be about *our* Father's business, is manifest when he said—Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect. We must conclude that one of two things is true—either that he meant what he said, and pointed to a Life that it is intended that we live, or that the chroniclers were not correct when they reported him as saying this.

If he had any belief in his divinity, on account of any abrogation of law, and therefore any miraculous element in connection with his birth, he not only, as we have already said, makes no mention of it whatever, much less does he make it any basis for his unique revelation and for his life of service. If the manner of his death likewise had anything to do with this same revelation, and with the fulfilment of this same life of service, he likewise makes no mention of it in connection with, or rather as being in any way *essential to these.*

He met death at the hands of an angry, entrenched ecclesiastical organisation, because he was so imbued with the truth that he had perceived and that his great soul urged him on to give the world—a truth that was contrary

to, and that therefore was detrimental to, the status quo of this organisation, from which all spirit and all life had already gone. Later, many years later, when the process of deification set in, as occurred also in connection with others of his time, and the chroniclers began to connect the far-fetched prophecies of the Old Testament Scripture with the manner of his death, a basis was established which the Church organisation several centuries afterward eagerly took advantage of, and an amazing system embodying a fallen humanity and an angry God and an atonement through the shedding of the blood of an innocent victim, was built up and given body and form in our numerous creeds, not one of which with their peculiar contents could ever have taken form, if *Jesus' own teachings* had been followed. So one can believe both the birth and the death stories of the creeds and the confessions, and still never touch even the hem of his garment, which enclosed entirely the part that lay between the two,—his life.

The real significance of Jesus, therefore, lies in what he taught, not in what occasioned him, nor in the peculiar manner of his death. The Church of the past and up to the present time, we might almost say, has taken one half—belief in Jesus. We have now reached the time when we are beginning to take the other half, the

infinitely more important half, the things that Jesus taught and lived. It is not faith in his person, it is faith in the life that he perceived and embodied, and therefore so effectively taught.

He stood as the embodiment and the revealer of a great truth. He said to his hearers: Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free, which put into another form could be stated thus—Ye shall know the reality of your being, and through this knowledge you will find your freedom. He called himself the servant of truth or rather the "Servant of the truth." The great emphasis he placed upon truth and the part that he continually taught that it must play in human life—that is, in all effective human living—marked him as a supreme religious teacher.

No wonder he came in conflict with the established religious order. No wonder that later thousands of his brave and devoted followers who have caught his spirit—who have understood his truth, and who have been ready for the same sacrifices that he was not only ready but eager for, if necessary, have come in conflict with the established religious order through all the centuries since his time and right up almost to our own generation.

Now what is the use, I hear it asked, of

referring to these things? The past is gone. Yes, and would to God that the stifling things of the past had gone with it. Unfortunately, much still remains; but the real answer is this —to show that there is still a great deal in organised Christianity that Jesus himself knew nothing of whatever. There are many things that are mere excrescences, some of them are the direct antithesis of the life and the teachings of the Christ. They are probably the cause of a great part of the barrenness of results of modern Christianity, compared to the results that Jesus said would follow.

They were formed and they were brought in to serve certain purposes. They had nothing to do with Jesus' fundamental truths. They served to keep men in bondage, and whether it be bondage to an institution or bondage to a belief it is immaterial. We have already noticed the scathing words of denunciation that Jesus used in regard to an institution, or in regard to the representatives of an institution, whose efforts were to bind the consciences of men and therefore the lives of men, to the teachings of that institution, instead of the one supreme thing that he taught, that the mind and the spirit should be bound to God alone. These also served to keep God's light and God's leading and sustaining power from the soul—they robbed the soul of its birthright,

the birthright that was proclaimed so clearly and so insistently by the Christ.

And what is this birthright? The answer to the question is the opening of the same door that looks out upon the plain with the infinite horizon—the realisation of the same divinity within us that was realised by himself, the coming into the same filial relations with the Father that he came so fully into harmonious relations with—the seeking, the realisation of, the living in the Kingdom.

I like these words from a recent address of one of the foremost preachers and writers of our time. They are significant of what the earnest forward-looking men, and in goodly numbers, in our churches are to-day thinking and are daring to say. Moreover he is a Baptist. He is one, however, who believes with Jesus, that the realisation of the life is the thing, and that the way to this realisation is of but minor importance. With him, therefore, it may be immersion or sprinkling, sprinkling or immersion. Moreover it may be either, neither, or both.

But here are his words: * "The unique thing

*From an address delivered before the International Y.M.C.A. Training School, by Dr. J. Herman Randall, pastor Mount Morris Baptist Church, New York; author of "A New Philosophy of Life," "Humanity at the Cross-roads," etc. Dodge Publishing Co., New York.

about Jesus was His consciousness of God. This is what makes Him divine; not because of any miracles, not because of any story of His birth, but because He possessed, as no other character in history, the God-consciousness. 'My meat and drink is to do the will of God.' He felt that the will of God was expressed through His will; that God's thought was expressed through His thought; that even His love flowed forth from the ultimate source of all love. He had become clearly awakened to the fact that His consciousness did not stand in isolation, that it went down to the universal consciousness and became one with God. Jesus said that what was true of Him might be true of all men and women. The same God who dwelt in Him dwells in us. The difference between Him and us is a quantitative not a qualitative difference. We may attain to the consciousness of God even as He was conscious of God. This is the deeper meaning of His message. The place of Jesus in history becomes more clear and luminous than ever before when we separate Him from the theological wranglings of the past and think of Him as representing the highest possibilities of human life. His personality is the goal of our human personality. His consciousness of the indwelling God is the ideal for the unfolding of our consciousness within.

"Whether the idea of the immanent God be new to us or not, the deepening of our personal experience will come, in just the degree in which we can grow into the consciousness that God is within. . . . Jesus came to bear His witness to the consciousness of God in human life, and then He disappears from the stage of human history, but the consciousness of God in the lives of men continues forever."

Among the last words that came to us through the gracious soul of that earnest and sincere scholar, Auguste Sabatier, are these that relate to faith in Christ: "Faith in Christ does not mean the acquiring of a particular notion of God; it means the living over again, *within ourselves,* the inner spiritual life of Christ, to feel the presence of the Eternal Father and the reality of our filial relation to him, just as Jesus felt in himself the Father's presence and his filial relation to him."

And so faith in Jesus is not a belief in the statements of the numerous and various creeds and confessions about Jesus, any more than to be a follower of Jesus is to be a worshipper of his person. If one makes his faith a belief in those things that no man knows,* especially

*It is interesting at times to recall the reply of a theological student who was once asked for a definition of faith. "Faith," said he, "is the power by which we are enabled to believe something that we know is not true."

those things that he never concerned himself with, we miss everything in connection with him and with his teachings that is worth while. It must be something that embodies itself fundamentally in the daily life—something that embodies itself in character, and conduct is the logical, if not indeed the only portrayal and evidence of character. It is, we might say, its sole method of expression.

To be a follower of Jesus does not even mean that he is necessarily a member of an organisation. It may, or it may not: it depends entirely upon the individual and upon the organisation. He must be a member of the Kingdom —something broader than the Church—broader, infinitely broader, than any ecclesiastical organisation at least has ever been.

VIII

WAS THE CHURCH SANCTIONED OR ESTABLISHED BY JESUS AND IS IT OF MAJOR OR OF MINOR IMPORTANCE? —IS THERE SOMETHING MORE IMPORTANT THAT HE ENJOINED?

A study of Jesus' own life and teachings as we are advocating, in order to get a basis of real fellowship with him, reveals the fact that in the first three Gospels alone, the Kingdom of Heaven that he so insistently said that he came to reveal and to lead men into the realisation of, is mentioned by him some thirty times. The word Church, or anything that could possibly be construed to mean the Church, is mentioned in the entire four Gospels twice. One mention refers clearly to the Jewish Church that was already established. The other mention is his use of the word *ecclesia,* in his reported conversation with Peter.

Many circumstances in connection with this reported saying of Jesus are looked upon by many eminent Bible scholars as at least sus-

picious. It is regarded by some as an interpolation fixed upon when the *canon* of the New Testament Scripture was finally decided upon, to give a greater semblance of authority to the ecclesiastical organisation that was finally evolved and formulated. To think that Jesus, giving his whole time during the period of his ministry, to the teaching of the Kingdom, should all of a sudden depart from this and give sanction, even explicit direction, for the forming of an organisation to be established in his name, seems well-nigh incredible.

It seems doubly so on account of the fact that he never referred to it again, and he never, apparently, thought it necessary to give any direction or even any suggestion as to the order or the form of an organisation. Knowing the horror that he had of the almost inevitable stratification that later takes place in organisations and especially in religious organisations, as is evidenced by practically his only words of condemnation, it is easy to see how incredible the claim seems, or appears to be.

It was one day when they were in Cæsarea Philippi that Jesus asked his disciples, saying: "'Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.' He said unto

them: 'But who say ye that I am?' Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus answered and said unto him—'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven. And I also say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it.'"

If some supernatural or divine authority had not been so industriously searched for after the Church organisation took form, it would have been apparent, had they made this statement of Jesus consistent with all of his other teachings and acts, that what Jesus meant was that upon this fact that Peter gave utterance to, namely, that *he was the Christ, the Messiah,* Jesus would build the ecclesia, the society of his followers.

His supreme judgment, his supreme knowledge of human nature, the absolute universality of all of his teachings, would indicate that it would be well-nigh impossible for him so suddenly to change his method and his message, and give in so many words direction for the establishing of an organisation in his name, especially knowing how it might be used and from his own observation how in all probability it would be used.

And when we consider the great complex organisation that several centuries later was superimposed by Rome upon the simple faith and the simple organisation of the Church of the Disciples, when she stopped persecuting the members of the early and original Church and decided to annex Christianity, we can see how enormously and how grotesquely it departed from the simple, open-air hillside teachings of Jesus, and his thoroughly spiritual but all-embracing teachings of man's intimate direct personal relations with the Father, without any intermediary except himself as the revealer of these relations, and of man's relations with his fellow-men—the direct outgrowth and the flowering of this teaching. To that rapidly growing number throughout the world who believe that the great crisis that Christianity is now facing, means that we are going to go back to Jesus' own direct teachings, and that we are going to free ourselves, and the Church to a great extent, from the ancient teachings about him, these words of the noted historian and writer, Goldwin Smith,* will be doubly illuminating:

"The word *ecclesia,* translated in our version 'church,' is twice found in the Gospels, where it has rather a strange look; one of the two places being that upon which the

*"The Founder of Christendom," by Goldwin Smith.

claim of the Papacy is founded. We cannot help doubting whether it came from the lips of Jesus. But if it did, he cannot have meant general councils, consistories, synods, and courts of ecclesiastical law; for he says that where two or three are gathered together in his name, there will he be in the midst of them. We can imagine nothing more alien to his mind than the form which, in later ages, the Church assumed. But if Christianity was not to be only a school of thought, like Stoicism or Platonism, but a spiritual society formed for mutual aid in godly living and the formation of a religious character, organisation was indispensable. Organisation necessarily implied authority. By a process easily divined if not historically recorded, authority, originally vested in the congregation, gradually centred in the bishops, to consecrate whose exaltation Apostolical Succession was devised. Ultimately, by a process not less natural, it was engrossed by the Bishop of Rome. . . . The office of the Twelve and that of the Seventy was clearly not ecclesiastical but missionary.

"Formalism of all kinds Jesus abhors. Apparently he would have disliked ritual, liturgical prayer-books, formal worship of all kinds. He seems to exclude them by enjoining the ever memorable prayer which we must trust

oral tradition to have faithfully handed down. Expansion, in this respect, liturgical and æsthetic, when worship came to be a regular and collective function, could not be avoided, though it might have stopped short of the prayer-mill. No dogmatism is put into the mouth of Jesus by the Gospels. Dogmatism could hardly exist before his deification. . . . When the Church unhappily, though perhaps inevitably, had been united to the empire, orthodoxy became law, and heresy, alas, became treason. Desperate were the shifts to which the Church in her darker days was put in her effort to extract from the sayings of Jesus anything like warrants for persecution and mandates for the Inquisition. . . . Hatred for formalism and legalism, as deadly enemies of genuine godliness, brought the Founder of Christendom into collision with the Pharisees, whom he denounces as hypocrites, whited sepulchres, destroyers of souls, with a vehemence startling in one so full of loving-kindness. Talmudic Judaism, with its tithing of mint and cummin and its neglect of the spiritual law, recognised its mortal enemy in Jesus. It sought to discredit him before he, invading its citadel, enabled it to take his life."

In addition to distinctly stating that his sole purpose was to bring men into a knowl-

edge of the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven, which he persistently identified as an inner experience and life, Jesus then uses the expression upwards of thirty times in the first three Gospels alone, as we have already stated. Any expression that could be identified with the word Church as an organisation, as we understand it, he uses but twice. Practically every act of his life, and every teaching, groups itself around the former. That it was pre-eminently a life that he taught becomes abundantly clear, as we follow directly his teachings and directly his life.

Even the word religion we do not find that he uses even once, at least in his recorded sayings. As he found infinitely more interest in contemporary events than he did in the religious orders or the religious teachings of his day, it is not difficult to surmise what he would find chief interest in in this our day. As he endeavoured to free the people from the mere letter of the organised ecclesiasticism of his day, as he taught them that it was far more valuable and far more essential that they so order their lives that the living God might speak directly to their own souls through the agency of what he taught as the Holy Spirit, so he unquestionably would teach to-day.

His question taking almost the form of a command—Why judge ye not of yourselves

what is right? is as true to-day as it was then. It seems to me infinitely more true. We have almost an infinite advantage over those of the earlier days—even the disciples of Jesus—on account of the great advances we have made in science and in discovery, whereby we have had revealed to us many of the great laws under which God works; and now through a well-established knowledge of the fact that he works only through law, science has freed us from many of the illusions that were fostered and formulated, and were made use of in holding the people in authority, even during the early centuries of the Christian Church.

Our older idea of the supposed conflict between science and religion *is rapidly* passing. We are finding that they are but two methods of reading or of understanding God, or rather the methods and the laws through which he manifests and works, not only in the universe about us, but also in the lives of individuals. "There can be no true religion," says a thoughtful writer, "which teaches us to shut our eyes to one scrap of knowledge or to one ray of truth." And it was Emerson who said: "Science corrects the old creed and necessitates a faith commensurate with the grander orbit and universal laws which it discloses."

He who is a worthy follower of the Christ, will recognise and will make use of every

good that there is in our modern Christian institutions, and he will help to sustain and to build them up. He will, however, not shirk his duty any more than did the Master shirk his duty, in endeavouring with others to eliminate that which is false, that which has already long ago served its purpose, that which would stand between the soul and the light through which God reveals himself directly to the individual soul; that which would get hold of men and women when they are children, and at an impressionable and unreasoning age, get their consent and allegiance, and then seek to bind their consciences to ancient creeds whose purport in some religious persuasions at least is, that the Church is the thing, that it should have obedience, and even that only through it can salvation come.

The true follower of the Christ is called upon to do the same valiant service to-day, as other valiant followers in goodly numbers have done before us. With them it was the freeing of men's minds, and the freeing of their lives from abuses that became at times well-nigh intolerable. With us it is the freeing of men's spirits by an adequate realisation of the full content of Jesus' great revelation and teaching, and thereby a participating, a bringing over from potentiality into actuality, the great spiritual and mystic forces that per-

tain to and that are continually operating in the realm of the divine.

That Christian experience cannot be alone personal, that as it manifests itself Godward, it will to a corresponding degree manifest itself manward, is abundantly and most concretely typified in Jesus' life. During his brief ministry he was ceaselessly doing his Father's will and works. He mingled continually with all classes, doing all good. He healed them of their infirmities when there was need for this service. He taught them the boundless measure of God's love, which was an entirely new revelation to them. He taught them that suffering is the wage of sin, and that if persisted in it is death. He taught that within each is a spiritual realm, that links us with the Divine —our origin and our source. He taught them that to live life from this centre, was to unify their lives with the one creative force, and therefore to live in harmony with the laws of this creative force, which works always for our good in the degree that we seek to know and to obey the laws through which it works, and thus work in conjunction with them.

He found such teachings given forth by some of the older Hebrew prophets, his predecessors, who had so ordered their thought, and therefore their lives, that the voice of God could speak through them. "They that wait

upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." Their religious life then became formulated and stereotyped. The people were taught that the voice of God had ceased to speak. They believed it, and for close to three hundred years no prophet had spoken. They believed that the faith had been already all delivered. The sole object of the Church, then, was to preserve the thing once delivered. The spiritual dearth and death that then ensued, we are familiar with.

The God-illumined soul of Jesus recognised and keenly realised this. So filled was he with his great consciousness of the union, of the essential oneness of the human with the divine, and the working of the divine in and through the human, that he realised himself as the Messiah, the leader of his people, out of their mental and their spiritual bondage. In doing this, he not only taught the positive truth that he taught, but wherever he saw that it hindered, he did not hesitate to denounce the organised religion that was absolutely dominant at the time, and that was feeding the people husks instead of the life-giving grain.

His clear insight, however, enabled him to

see that through this course he would not only incur the displeasure, but in time the deep-seated hatred of Scribe and Pharisee. His own message of the Kingdom of Heaven, his own conception and his own presentation of the truly religious life, must necessarily oppose itself to the religion of form and ceremony and the preserving of the faith once delivered, that was dominant at his time. As he went along farther in his ministry, he began to realise that sooner or later a definite attempt would be made to crush him. He receded not a bit, and he was ready for whatever came.

His course finally brought denunciation, intrigue, and condemnation. He was true to the light that led him on; and then they killed him. He was nailed to the cross, which was the customary Roman method of executing felons and of dealing with gross disturbers of the peace and violators of the law or alleged violators of the law in his day. Rather than be silent when he burned within to give his great message of redemption to the world, he went valiantly forward, he met his fate willingly, though we can perhaps scarcely say cheerfully.

He felt that his disciples, whom he had laboured with so diligently to instruct in the matters of the Kingdom, would go out and would carry his message to Jew, to Gentile,

and then eventually to all the world—small as it was, or small as the *known world* was at his time. He looked for a continuance of life beyond this life, and he so taught his disciples. Although he had experienced great difficulty in getting his disciples to catch the real spiritual content of his teachings, instead of the material interpretations they were so prone to give them, he felt that in his absence they would be less dependent upon him. He felt that the Father would then send them the Holy Spirit in greater degree, that they might be more divinely guided in going out to proclaim his message. The very last moment of his life gave a concrete illustration to the force of his teachings and the way they had encompassed his own life. Abounding faith asserted itself. Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit. Godward. Father forgive them, for they know not what they do. Manward. There were moments when the human almost got the mastery of his God-consciousness. So supreme, however, was his realisation that it triumphed—through to the end.

Although Jesus clearly foresaw his death, and spoke frequently of it, he never attributed any significance to it apart from his life. He saw it as the outcome of his braving to teach the things that he taught and to do the things that he did, in the face of the entrenched

ecclesiastical organisation and rule of his time, knowing that eventually they would seek to crush him and thereby, in their ignorance, his message.

He undoubtedly also felt, after he realised that his death was inevitable if he persisted in his course, that it would put a certain seal upon his life-work, and he was willing thus to give his life as "a ransom for many." But during his life he had actually done this. He had brought a new life to man; he had made the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and the active participation of the individual in the life of this kingdom known. This he said continually was the purpose of his life and his ministry. By his teaching and by his gracious, patient presence with them, he had made known the Father, and through it all, they who would had come into possession of a new life. They thereby had been ransomed from the power of sin and from the result of sin, and he imposed no other conditions. Through the imparting and the utilisation of this knowledge the atonement had been made —the atonement had become a fact.

As says a recent writer in connection with the conception of the atonement on the part of thinking people to-day: "The modern conception of atonement is therefore not that of salvation by the penal substitution of the inno-

cent for the guilty, but a vital participation of Christ *to* the life of humanity, whereby a redemptive energy of a wonderful kind breathes into the life of men, and brings them to the potentialities of their being." Nor can we believe, knowing Jesus' knowledge of law and the sustaining power that this knowledge gave him, that his death on the cross, which he met so unflinchingly, was that gruesome thing, filled with such unspeakable agonies of suffering, that later ecclesiastical art and images devised for the purpose of rivetting the attention of the people on his death, gave to us.

Thousands of men since his time, with but a faint knowledge of the potential powers within them, and with a purpose not a hundredth part as clearly defined as was his purpose, have gone to their death bravely and unflinchingly, and without a moment's hesitation. Their ideal, wisely or unwisely founded, as the case may be, has sustained them and has moved them unflinchingly to that point.

While the supreme test of a man's ideal or belief or purpose be that he be willing and ready to lay down his life for his friends, or for that in which he believes, the systems that were formulated in the after ages, were so constructed as to make his death eclipse his life; and when his latter life and his death

were primarily fixed upon, when the Church beliefs were evolved and formulated and were prepared to be taught, the second great tragedy of Jesus' life occurred.

The first was, as we have already seen, the constant tendency on the part of his disciples, and of his immediate hearers, to miss the real vital spiritual content of his teachings and to drag them down through purely material interpretations. The second was that the great work of his life, that he so distinctly stated was the purpose and the end of his ministry, should be almost completely passed over and that his death and the suffering incident to his death, undoubtedly immensely magnified, and both mere incidents in his life, should be made paramount. And thereby has a great injury been perpetrated, not only to himself, but to those things that he held so dear, so dear even that he was willing to lay down his life that they might become known, and that they become engrafted in the consciousness of men, thereby releasing a great redemptive energy into the world; but it has also been an injury to all succeeding generations, in that a speculative system, built later upon his suffering and his death, has had the effect of almost entirely eclipsing his life and the great purpose for which it stood.

When, then, generations later he came to

be deified and worshipped, a propaganda of enigma, subtleties, and mysteries was entered upon, followed by grotesque and interminable discussions, and these in turn followed by hatred, persecution, and killings, which show of themselves that the foundation seized upon was totally false. Although the loss to the people that has resulted from this course has been incalculable, when we become acquainted with the thought and the customs of the time, we see that in some measure at least it is easy that it be forgiven. Our earliest creeds and our earliest Church canons were formed by men of Greco-Roman demi-God ideas, with a considerable share of pagan beliefs and practices. When Christianity was annexed by Rome, Rome was purely pagan, and she made no pretence of anything else. Even Constantine, later called The Great, under whose rule Christianity was annexed by Rome and made the State religion, was quite as much pagan after his announced conversion to Christianity as before. It was after he became a Christian that he put to death his wife and his son.

His interest in Christianity, now growing in power and in influence, was chiefly that he might use it as an agency in uniting the warring factions in his Empire; that he was influenced to a great extent by this reason, is seen in his action at the Council of Nicea, at

which gathering, in 325, the Nicean Creed, the first real creed, was formed. Here the first statements concerning Jesus and the Church on any extensive scale, and on any authoritative basis, were formulated. The Nicean Creed is a product primarily of Greek thought, and in it the doctrine of the Trinity finds full expression.

Growing out of the not uncommon thought even in regard to others, the supernatural element in Jesus had gradually been taking form, and as the idea of the Trinity took shape, it was finally decided that he was God, that is, it was officially so decided. Mary thereby became the Mother of God, and Mary's mother, Anne, became the grandmother of God. Later there grew up a large organisation, the Society of St. Anne, and she was also worshipped. Then arose and continued for centuries the interminable discussions regarding the Trinity, and the innumerable questions, unknown and unknowable, that arose out of it. Some of the Church Fathers refused to acknowledge that Jesus was God when he was a three-months-old baby crying in his mother's arms. There also arose the question whether Jesus was God when still in his mother's womb, and if not God, what God was doing in the meantime. These are but samples of what the Church, after it began to formulate its

extensive creeds, had to deal with and did deal with.

The fact that these things were not especially related, or rather not vitally related, to the problems of every-day life, is perhaps one reason why the great spiritual dearth in the Church that soon came about, did come about. It may be one reason, also, why the type of reasoning that we see manifested on the part of those in authority even during the Middle Ages came about—a type of reasoning that formulated many public proclamations that had to be accepted and believed by the people.

The famous Bull *Unam Sanctam,* issued by Pope Boniface VIII in 1302, just before the birth of Wiclif, is a typical example of mediæval bible exegesis. Of this the well-known contemporary historian and bible scholar, Dr. Gilbert,* says: "This Bull seeks to prove from Scripture that the Church is one, and that out of it no salvation is possible. This is accomplished by three passages. The first is from the Song of Solomon (6: 9):—'My love, my undefiled, is one.' This is taken to mean the mystical body of Christ. The second passage is from Genesis (6: 13-16). The ark of Noah symbolised the Church, and as there was but one ark, so there is but one

* "Interpretation of the Bible," by George Holley Gilbert, Ph.D., D.D. The Macmillan Co., New York.

Church; and the fact that the ark was finished 'in one cubit' meant that one Noah (i.e., the Pope of any particular age) was the helmsman. And finally when the psalmist says (22:20):—

'Deliver my soul from the sword;
My darling from the power of the dog,'

he means by 'soul' Christ himself, and by 'darling' he means the Church, whose oneness is also plainly signified by the seamless garment of Jesus."

In a summary of the methods of biblical interpretation in the Middle Ages, he also says in part: "In the mediæval period of the Church, as in the Talmudic period of the Synagogue, an orthodox theology, resting on tradition which was interpreted and backed by ecclesiastical authority, discountenanced or anathematised independent investigation of Scripture. As among the Jews of the Talmudic period the Old Testament was to be read by the light of the authorised interpretation, so in the mediæval period the entire Bible was to be read, if at all, through the eyes of the Fathers. And so it came to pass that the influence of the Fathers on the conceptions of Christian theology immeasurably surpassed the influence of Christ and his apostles."

Although the Nicean Creed was formed to fix the teachings of Christianity, the discus-

sion centred chiefly around the nature of Jesus. The two chief factions were Arius and his followers, and Athanasius and his followers. Arius maintained that "Jesus was the highest of God's creatures, and yet there was a time when he was not, so he was not equal with God." Athanasius insisted that "Jesus was of the very same substance with the Father." It was a notable assembly of 318 bishops, with crowds of attendant clergy and sympathisers. It represented the entire Church, and they gathered from all quarters.

Stormy and violent, however, were the debates. Intense feelings were aroused. Documents were torn to pieces in actual struggles. One aged bishop, the historians say, inflicted a blow upon a heretic's ear. But the situation was critical, for Constantine had only recently legalised Christianity, and any radical divisions in the Church might react disastrously upon the Empire. The Emperor made it known that he expected *something definite* to result from the convocation. He did not care for the discussion of doctrine, nor for the advance of truth. He did care, however, that the schism which had already started in the Church, come to an end, in order that his rule might not be in danger. He cast his influence and his lot with Athanasius and his party, and the Nicean Creed was formed.

It was the first authoritative statement of faith that received the endorsement or the sanction of representatives of the entire Church. It became the basis for succeeding centuries of Church faith and the bulk of it still stands to-day. It crystallised the various theories that had been growing in regard to Jesus during the two preceding centuries. I have referred to it here, although very briefly and inadequately, because it throws light upon the fact that it evolved and put into authoritative, absolutely authoritative form, certain things about Jesus that were entirely unknown to him, to his disciples, and to all of his own immediate time.

There was a custom of the time that we should not lose sight of. The Romans had various Gods. Not infrequently a human, on account of some unusual characteristic or trait, gradually became deified and became either a semi-God or a God. Things were then formulated about him for which there was no basis whatever. Deification of an individual, which would be well-nigh impossible with us, or rather to start with us, was an easy and a natural thing with them. A great leader or a favourite emperor was many times thus dealt with by them. The following words by the noted English bible historian and writer, Professor Carpenter, throws much light

upon this matter. After portraying the various miracles that in after ages grew up in connection with the birth, the life, and the death of Buddha, after his deification, and the corresponding gross corruptions of his teachings that took place, and after stating that from the age of the Buddha to the last century the glamour of miracle shines round the long succession of India's teachers, he says: *

"The lives of Christian saints are adorned again and again with the same tissue of marvel. No long time is needed for its growth. The freedman of the Emperor Augustus related that wondrous portents had heralded his master's birth. The Roman Senate, warned of coming danger to their power, resolved that no child born that year should be reared. A little later it was affirmed that the mother of the future ruler of Rome had conceived in the temple of Apollo. Even during his own lifetime the most exalted attributes were ascribed to him. A German archæological expedition in Asia Minor in the last decade of the last century discovered some remarkable inscriptions among the remains of the ancient cities Halicarnassus and Priene, Apameia and Eumeneia. They were concerned partly with

* "The Historical Jesus and the Theological Christ," by J. Estlin Carpenter, D.Litt., D.D.

the introduction into Asia of the Julian calendar, and partly with the institution of a general holiday on the birthday of Augustus, September 23rd. The historian Mommsen referred them to the year 11 or 9 B.C. Very noteworthy is the employment of the word *evangelia,* glad tidings or gospels; 'the birthday of the god is become the beginning of glad tidings through him to the world.' He is designated 'the Saviour of the whole human race'; he is the beginning of life and the end of sorrow that man was ever born; he has been sent by Providence to put an end to war; and peace prevails on earth and sea. When such hopes gathered round the reigning Cæsar, was it surprising that he should be regarded as a very impersonation of Deity? An inscription at Philæ described him as 'star of all Greece who has arisen as great Saviour Zeus'; while the echoes of Egyptian theology are heard in the preceding language which calls him 'Zeus out of Father Zeus.' Yet no one doubts the humanity of Augustus, or the solid reality of his imperial sway."

But why, one asks, deal longer, or why deal at all with these matters, for there are very few people to-day who are held either by Church doctrine or by the creeds? True, and not true. While it is utterly inconceivable that any body of men, that is free men and with

the most ordinary intelligence, in the light of our modern knowledge, could formulate such statements of belief and such codes of doctrine, as were formulated by those of centuries ago, it is nevertheless true that our Church organisations still hold on to many of those things that intelligent people of the present time feel are of no importance, and other things that they feel are absolutely untrue, and that are *directly contrary* to the teachings of the Christ.

The fact that we retain them simply because they have to do with religion, or at least with Church organisation, acts detrimentally in two ways. It keeps from the people, especially in those churches where their retention is the most fully insisted upon, those great spiritual truths and forces for use in the *daily life,* the revelation of which Jesus made the great purpose of his life. Their minds are diverted to inconsequential things about him. They are thereby robbed of the finest truths and the finest fruits of Christianity. On the other hand, it keeps a rapidly increasing number of people numbering now unquestionably millions throughout Christendom—clear-thinking and God-aspiring men and women—from active participation in Christian fellowship, because they believe not only in honesty of thought, but they believe also in *honesty of statement.*

They insist upon a *word-form* that is consistent with our modern knowledge and consistent with twentieth-century methods of thought.

But this very attitude of mind is pushing them beyond prevailing Church belief and Church holdings, and under freer types of leadership, yes, more modern types, if you please, they are entering into participation of the results of the teachings of the Christ because they are going directly to him and to his teachings untrammelled by theories, or bulls, or dictums about him. It seems too bad that this splendid body of men and women are not working side by side, and hand in hand, with our Church organisation, with its great possibilities, so far beyond what it is able to realise, or at least what it is actually realising to-day.

The splendid body of men in our ministry to-day, the great bulk of whom feel handicapped by the remnants of the load of pre-mediævalism that the Church carries to-day, and that they perforce are made to share in, should also be considered. We must realise and realise clearly that the conditions to-day in connection with Christianity are different from what they have been at any time in its history. A wonderfully advancing science has freed us from things that bound the

imagination and that bound the minds, almost universally, of those before us.

A vital and a supremely healthy interpretation of Jesus' life and teachings is being made by agencies outside of the Church. There is a tremendous demand and an insistent demand for a restatement of Christian thought and practice, based upon the teachings and the practices of the Christ, in place of that partly meaningless and that questionable statement that we now have, formulated by pre-mediæval minds, who in order to make an acceptable and an authoritative Church doctrine, were so intent upon formulating things about the Christ, that they dropped from mind almost entirely the teachings of the Christ.

The vast majority of men in our ministry are forward-looking men and men of earnest purpose—men who realise what is going on inside and outside of the Church. They feel the handicap under which they are compelled to labour. It is the duty of the great laity in Christendom, to stand for and to stand with them, so that when our Church Councils meet, a group of men with their faces to the past, and deaf evidently to both the present and to the future, do not impede the freeing of the larger number from the incubus of ecclesiastical statements that are to-day not only value-

less, but that are positively and actively enervating.

It would seem that we had reached the time when it would not be so difficult to change those things that we have outgrown and that become positive hindrances even though they have to do with religion, or with something connected with religion. It would seem as if *the example* of Jesus would be at least of some slight help in this regard. To think that one who fought with all the powers of his brave, intrepid, illumined soul against the formulated dogmas of ecclesiasticism, that the spirit of man might be freed and that he might come into possession of his real heritage as was revealed by him, could sanction for a moment the dogmas of ecclesiasticism of the ages that succeeded him, and that in some cases, or rather in some organisations, remain to-day more deadly than those he so bitterly condemned and refused obedience to, is entirely beyond human comprehension.

The example of his own life in this respect should be a tremendous help to us, in doing those things that are so insistently called for to-day, that Christ's truth and thereby his Kingdom may spread to their widest limits. Clear-thinking and independent acting men who, under the direct ministry of Jesus' teachings, have realised the Christ within, and who

thereby have freed themselves from the shackles of tradition and of outward authority, are to-day in increasing numbers speaking vital words and doing vital things, that are becoming sources of inspiration and are becoming calls for action on the part of many others.

IX

OUR DEBT TO THE PROPHETS OF ISRAEL: AS THE DIVINE VOICE SPOKE TO AND THROUGH THEM SO IT SPEAKS TO-DAY

And so this young Palestinian Jew, the son of Mary and of Joseph, the carpenter, this Jesus who, through the supreme consciousness of *the reality* of his being, became the Christ, this Jesus who was the culmination, the perfect flowering of a long line of illustrious Hebrew prophets, of a race that stands in history uniquely related to the highest revelations in religion, is coming to-day, as never before, into his own. It is because men and women of thought and purpose are to-day sitting at his feet, to catch those wonderful truths of life and of spirit, that even his disciples who sat at his feet on those clear Judæan hillsides so many centuries ago, were unable at times adequately to grasp.

Although Jesus' revelation was so supremely new and vital, that it resulted in practically a new religion, we must remember always that he was essentially a Jew, and

that he lived and died as such, the same as did all of his disciples. His ancestors for generations back were Jews, and his was the religion of Israel.

Before he entered upon his ministry, he became thoroughly acquainted with the old Hebrew Scriptures. It was undoubtedly the voices of her prophets that appealed to that inner consciousness of his, possessed as it was from the beginning with a wonderful aptitude for the things of the spirit, and from which arose the new conception of God and of man and of their intimate relations in reality, that helped to make his teachings distinctive and authoritative in the realm of religion.

He taught occasionally in the synagogue. He observed the rites of the synagogue, except when they came in conflict with his deeper and truer sense of religion. When they interfered with the Spirit, he balked. He refused to observe them; he taught the people not to observe them—for there was something better—and he scathingly rebuked those who insisted upon their observance. Paul and his co-workers and followers later came into conflict and apparently into violent conflict with the Palestinian disciples and Jewish bodies. The differences in their thought and their methods gave rise to numerous epistles which

later found their way into the canon of the New Testament Scripture. It could be truthfully said that a considerable portion of the New Testament Scripture, outside of the four Gospels, is but a record of the controversies or of the conflicting viewpoints of these two earnest bodies of workers.

It is not at all improbable also that at least two of the Gospels, that of Matthew, written near the close of the first century and receiving its completed form during the opening years of the second century, and that of John, which was not written until considerably after the opening of the second century, bear traces also of these influences and of conceptions that were foreign to the thoughts of Jesus' own disciples, for many of the writings of Paul were written and were extant for many years before these two Gospels were written.

The Church of the Disciples was essentially a Jewish body, but the old dispensation for them was abrogated when Jesus brought his tremendous vital spirit of religion, and by virtue of it they passed into the new dispensation.

And so when we get Jesus' great revelation, the divinity, the Divine sonship of man, by virtue of our common parentage—God the Father—and from it the inevitable brotherhood, it is well for us to remember that we are

still under obligation to that long line of hardy, virile Hebrew prophets, those men who so ordered their lives that God could speak to and through them, could lead them, and thereby their people. They it was who made the most valuable portions of our Old Testament Scripture possible. True, many of them had their faults; some of them engaged in practices that to-day would cause them to be ostracised from ordinary decent society. If engaged in among us to-day, our code of morals and our statutes *would compel us* to send this one or that one to jail for a period, or perhaps to the electric chair, the same as we do others for like offences.

This indicates two things—that they did the best that they knew—under the old dispensation. Secondly, that we have grown immensely in the meantime—under the new dispensation. But the new was brought about by a descendant, in reality by one of the old. He was born in the old, but he in turn so ordered his life, that he gave birth to the new; and to-day as then some of the finest of Christians are Jews. "But the Jews crucified the Saviour," I hear it said. A little group crucified him, a little group so steeped in the dogmas of ecclesiasticism, of formal religion, that the sole range of their vision and their sole purpose was to preserve the faith once delivered.

They stood for authority. They knew not the Spirit. But Jesus would have been condemned, anathematised, and crucified a hundred times over, by the organisation of his own Church, had he dared to question, to speak against, and to teach others the downright sin of blindly following authority, in distinction from following that inner light, the promptings of the Holy Spirit that he realised and that he sought to make the very centre of religion. They did this to thousands of his earnest and true followers, through the various centuries for *this same reason,* and they would have done it to him. Certainly the greatest of all religious revolutionists would not have remained silent when brought face to face with the abuses that brought so many of his followers to martyrdom.

Each age is linked in a very definite way with all the ages that have preceded it. In this our day when there is a great longing on the part of all people, and everywhere, for a closer touch with Reality, and an intense longing to live life more fully from its centre, all helps that can be appropriated from other lives and from other times, are not only inspiring, but concretely helpful. "Every man is a divinity in disguise," said Emerson. And he spoke still more concretely when he said: "If a man have found his centre, the Deity will

shine through him,—through all the disguises of ignorance, of ungenial temperament, of unfavourable circumstance."

Some of those rugged old Hebrew prophets, living their simple lives in the midst of their fields and their flocks, came into such close touch with reality, that many of their precepts are of inestimable value to us to-day. And one of the most valuable things or, rather, features for us, is that with them, it was so natural and so simple—there was no element of mystery about it at all. Common men they were, some of them very common and even crude; but men with a wonderful genius in getting close to reality. All too infrequently do we recall that day when a simple vine-dresser, by the name of Amos, left his vineyard and stood before the king of Israel and spoke without fear or favour what was pent up in his soul—"Prophet," said he, "I am no prophet; only a plain farmer; but I come by God's call to tell you the truth." The full account is a record of one of the great days in the history of religion and of liberty.

In the degree that we realise that the very essence of religion is the consciousness of God in the soul of man, we will get over the idea that God *has* spoken, only. If indeed it is so it is purely our fault. But it is not so; and he speaks to-day as always, to all who

meet the conditions that are established whereby he can speak.

There is no more reason why he should speak to a man at work in his vineyard or ploughing in his fields three thousand years ago, than that he should speak to and thereby through a man at work in his vineyard, his orchard, or following his plough in New York state, or in Illinois, or in Montana to-day. On the other hand, there is rather every reason why he should speak more often and more abundantly to-day than then. We have advanced infinitely beyond those of that day in an understanding of the laws and the forces through which God works. We have had the advantage of their examples; and still more, we have had the example as well as the revelation of the still greater prophet of Nazareth, he who was of God so uniquely and so supremely that the great passion and mission of his life became that of revealing God to man and drawing man into more intimate relations with his Source.

When the old prophet said: "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty," we should have a still clearer realisation of this fact by virtue of the wonderful revelation that the Judæan Teacher has made to us. Isaiah came closer to even modern every-day life than we are apt to realise when he said: "And the

spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might;" and Zechariah when he said: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." And what a sense and what a feeling of guidance and protection is embodied in these words—"He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways, they shall bear thee up in their hands lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." No, the voice that spoke to Zechariah and Isaiah, to Moses and to Paul, will speak to us to-day just as fully as it spoke to them, if we make it our concern to provide the conditions whereby it will speak. This we can declare to all men on the authority of Jesus the Christ.

X

A FULLER REALISATION AND USE OF THE ETERNAL POWER WITHIN THAT BRINGS PEACE AND POWER AND WISE DIRECTION

The "spirit of wisdom and understanding," which was what Jesus meant by his term, the Holy Spirit, becomes a source of guidance in all of the affairs of the daily life when we realise our true relationship to our Source, and when through desire and through will we come to live in that attitude of mind and of heart that makes our connection with this divine Source adequate. "With thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light." "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth his spirit into your hearts." "Thou shalt decree a thing and it shall be established unto thee." Does this not sound very much like "the spirit of counsel and might" of which Isaiah spoke?

As we get a deeper sense of the spiritual realities and forces of life, we will realise that Jesus had a knowledge of forces finer than

those that we ordinarily know, as well as the laws of their working, when he said: "Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." But a knowledge of these finer forces and the laws of their working become sufficiently understood and become available for the needs of the daily life, when we comply with the conditions whereby they come about.

So far as Jesus discovered the methods he made them known to us. He spoke whereof he knew, although from the realm of the unseen spiritual forces, when he said: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you." With his great aptitude—genius, if you please—for the things of the spirit, he believed in God, believed in God as spirit, creative spirit, and he identified his spirit, his real life, with Divine creative spirit. This to him was God. His conception of God was the "Heavenly Father." In his own mind and life it took the form of this close filial relationship.

His various references, however, make it evident that in reality it was, that Spirit of Infinite Life and Power that is back of all, in and through all, the life of all. In the degree that we realise this Divine creative spirit as the source of our life and the source of our

strength, do we enter into that Kingdom of God, that Jesus taught is the one all-inclusive thing. And as we call upon it does it manifest itself in and through us to a continually increasing degree.

We become partakers ever more fully of the higher wisdom and the higher powers. Jesus identified his life so completely with the Father's life, that he became the possessor of insights and powers that were above those that were possessed or even dreamed of by those among whom he lived and moved and worked. My God and your God he taught. As I am so ye shall be. This Kingdom of Heaven, this divine rule in the mind and life comes in response to our earnest seeking and our earnest desire. If we really desire it and if through the action of the will we *really choose it*—it will lead us in the way of all good.

In other words it means this—that the religion of the spirit, the Christianism of the Christ, links the human with the Divine, man with his God, and makes him at once son of man and Son of God, the same as Jesus became and as is his great significance for us. It makes active in our lives, it calls from the realm of the potential into the realm of the actual, powers and forces and leadings that otherwise we remain ignorant of and there-

fore without actual possession of, until with Jesus we realise our essential oneness with our Source.

I and my Father are one, said he. And we can never get away from the fact that it was "my God and your God" that he taught, if the life and the revelation of Jesus is to be of the full value to us that he so eagerly longed that they be. This means the recovery of the great spiritual elements and forces which have faded all too fully into the background in connection with the life and the message of Jesus. It is the recovery by us of those inspirations and those forces that have been the realisation and the possession of all the great mystics and prophets down through all the centuries since Jesus' time.

He has shown us the way—the spirit we must apply ourselves. It is not what Jesus would do in this or that circumstance. It is how the Spirit of Wisdom that he brought us knowledge of, and into such potential vital relations with, directs us, each as an individual, as it always will if we trust our lives fully to its leadings. It is the spirit of power—Divine power, if you please—that will manifest itself through us as it did through Jesus in the degree that we make our minds and thereby our lives a channel through which it can work—in the degree that we take our pedi-

gree from God as Jesus taught, and not from "Adam."

In the degree that we follow that first great injunction that the Master enjoined, that of love to God, so fully, that our one desire is that the rule of God becomes supreme in our minds and hearts and lives, in that degree will the light of Heaven begin to illumine the soul; in that degree does the Holy Spirit awaken within us a sense of the life eternal, that makes many of the problems, and the whole round of petty annoyances in the daily life, dwindle in their proportions, compared to those they have heretofore assumed. There comes as never before a distinct and a profound realisation that underneath are the Everlasting Arms. Faith becomes ever more dominant, and we have a profound conviction that whatever the occurrence may be at any point along life's highway, that out of it all, good, and only good, will come. The central truth of Burroughs' splendid stanza becomes a reality to us:

"I stay my haste, I make delays,
For what avails this eager pace?
I stand amid eternal ways,
And what is mine shall know my face."

The good Quaker poet, Whittier, also touched reality when he said:

"I have no answer for myself or thee,
Save that I learned beside my mother's knee;
All is of God that is or is to be.
And God is Good."

If Jesus taught anything clearly, it was that in the realm of the inner spiritual forces are the real issues of life; that as we live life from its centre, these forces become active and usable.

Even in connection with what we call our material lives, we are getting continually more and more on the track of the finer forces, and are discovering the laws of their working. We do not know in all cases exactly how they work, but we know that they do work. Because we do not always understand them, we do not speak of them as mere sentimental things. But we say—it is the way God works in the universe about us.

If we are true to what we know to-day and push on, we will know more about them to-morrow. Edison knows a great deal about electricity. Just what it is and exactly how it works in every case, he does not know—at least he didn't know—last week. He does, however, know that as a force and under given conditions, it does work; and the wonderful applications that he has made of it as a force

are familiar in many different forms, to millions of people throughout the world to-day. And so in regard to the spiritual laws and forces in life. We are getting rapidly beyond the point where merely because we do not know how they may work we regard them in the light of mere sentimental things. We say rather—it is the way God works in human lives.

The ablest and keenest thinkers among us, and men of the highest types of lives, are realising that we do not avail ourselves of these helps in the daily life to anywhere near the extent that it is good and wise that we do. Our own William James, France's Henri Bergson, Germany's Rudolf Eucken, Britain's Sir Oliver Lodge, are but examples of men of keen, penetrating minds who have caught greater glimpses of reality, who have followed their lead, and who have sent forth the call to other men to look more diligently along these same lines.

Every one of them agrees with the great prophet of Nazareth, that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. And with his teaching—that the voice of God is continually and eternally within, they all agree. It is through the independent thought and ventures of such men that we are learning more and

more of the finer forces in life. Said one of them not so long ago: "The Boundary between the known and the unknown is wearing thin in places."

In our material activities we are abandoning the heavier, cruder forms of power, and we are using in their stead the finer forces that we are gradually attaining an ever greater knowledge of. The ox is replaced by electrical power, we conduct through a single piece of wire energy that will do in an hour what a hundred oxen could not do in a week.

In our mental and spiritual lives we make life and its problems far more complex than we need to, if we will but avail ourselves of the use of the forces, and put ourselves under the guidance of the leadings, that the great spiritual genius and prophet of Nazareth, through his wonderful aptitude for things of the spirit and of God, perceived and lived and taught.

The following utterance by Archdeacon Wilberforce in a sermon preached in St. John's, Westminster, shows how big men in our churches are taking things that really count in connection with life to their people: "The secret of optimism is the mental effort to abide in conscious oneness with the Supreme Power, the Infinite Immanent Mind evolving a perfect purpose. When you are thus mentally

abiding in the 'secret place of the Most High,' you live above all 'happenings,' whatever may be their soul-harrowing cost. Moreover, this attitude benefits the community, for it makes a thought-atmosphere. It is beginning to be recognised as a fact in mental science that thoughts do produce vibrations, helpful or harmful. When many are thinking from the basis of conscious oneness with the Infinite Mind, their combined thoughts have a direct influence in shaping conditions and events. This is called by some 'mass-suggestion,' by others the 'psychology of crowds'; we call it the prayer of faith. I cannot define its operation, but it is certain that the machinery of events does move in the direction of strong and combined human thinking."

And the following from a still more recent utterance will be welcomed by all forward-looking men, both laymen and ministers: "Our slow-moving minds may be long in recognising it, and our unspiritual lives may seem to contradict it; but deep in the centre of the being of every man there is a divine self to be awakened, a ray of God's life which Paul calls 'the Christ in you.' Jesus is the embodiment of the universal principle of the immanence of God in man. He is the symbol, the sacrament, the outward and visible sign of the divine nature immanent in the race; and in that aspect his appeal to

humanity is: 'As I am, so are ye in this world; I am divine spirit in perfection, ye are divine spirit in germ. Infinite Mind is "greater than all." "The Father is greater than I," in the sense that the Infinite must necessarily be greater than even its highest possible manifestation, just as diffused electricity is greater than the lightning flash that manifests it; but in your rudimentary mental condition you cannot know either yourselves, or the Infinite Father Spirit fully, influentially, except through his self-manifestation in me, and my identification with you.' Thus is Jesus the 'Mediator,' or uniting medium between God and man. . . . The principle of what is called Christianity is the immanence of our Father-God in humanity; the fact that individual men are separate items in a vast solidarity in which Infinite Mind is expressing himself. Jesus has shown us what the ideal is to which that principle will lead. . . .

"Remember God must win us. We are his vehicles. He cannot lose us. He must overcome creaturely defect and obstinacy. He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. Divine love is the spirit of evolution effecting the moral perfection of man. To resist divine love is like resisting the law of gravitation; the resistance may seem successful for a time, but the law wins in the end.

The mystic Christ will win us here or hereafter. To find him within us now, to let him conquer us now, to recognise him as Emmanuel God with us, God for us, God in us, is the secret and soul of spiritual progress. To pass through the painful puzzle of this life's education calmly certain that, in all circumstances and conditions, an omnipotent all-wise Friend is ever desiring to rule our life, this it it is to be vitalised, empowered, elevated."

XI

A STATEMENT OF JESUS' CHRISTIANISM IN TERMS OF PRESENT-DAY LIFE AND PROBLEMS

As we are rapidly getting away from the ambulance stage in our conceptions of Christianity, so we are getting away, and some of our churches to a notable degree, from a "contemplative selfishness which makes our entire religious life hardly more than a monologue." We have already said that both in our churches and out of our churches, great numbers of men and women of independent thought and of high purpose, are endeavouring to get at the essence of Jesus' own life and teachings; they have become dissatisfied with both doctrine and form, and are going back to an examination of early beginnings.

In this they are making a twofold study—Jesus' own life, activities, and teachings; and secondly, the basis upon which the Church as an organisation was built. They are studying the early creeds and their later amplifications, and the methods of their formation. They are studying into the various dogmas that later re-

ceived official sanction, and that thereby gradually became the established Church doctrine. They are impressed with the fact that somehow they and Jesus dealt with entirely different matters; they moved, so to speak, in an entirely different orbit. And as they become acquainted with many of the mythical traditions upon which the organisation was built and through which authority was gained, they find that as the early Church of the Disciples, simple but with a wonderful spirit, was made to give way to the highly complex Roman organisation, authority, orthodoxy became the watchword, and the essential thing was to support the validity of the early theories which grew into set forms of doctrine about Jesus.

These assumed in time the ascendency, so that the really characteristic features of Jesus' own life and teachings were pushed almost completely into the background. They are finding that on account of his active life of service being pushed so completely into the background, and his death being made later the chief thing, there has come down to us a portrait of him, fashioned by both pen and by statue, that they are convinced is a mere travesty of the virile, active, stirring personality that he was. Through this direct study of his active life and ministry, they are constructing a new image, a new ideal of him.

They are concluding also that to be a Christian, one must think and act as Jesus thought and acted. They are finding that the dominating thought of Jesus' life took a twofold form, that God was his father and that man was his brother, and that also he must, by every means available, bring all men into this twofold realisation and relationship. It was with him not only a belief in God—I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth—it was a belief that God was his father and that he must come into an intimate personal relationship with him. It was also his belief that God was equally the Father of all other men, and that every other man was therefore his brother.

So the thinking man of to-day, realising that when Jesus summarised the essence of religion in his reply to the lawyer as love for God, and love for the neighbour, it means that to be a follower of the Christ, therefore a Christian, one must come into these same intimate personal relations with God in all the phases of his inner life so fully, that he has no desire other than to do the will of God as through this relationship it will be made manifest to him; and that he shall recognise every other man as his brother and shall love him as such,—and growing out of this and an integral part of it, that he can show his love for his God only as he shows his love for his neigh-

bour, and that the only way he can serve God is through service to his neighbour.

And so he is realising that whatever in the historic faith of the Church centres around these essentials of Jesus is of value, that all other things are inconsequential and may be even detrimental. If therefore a man's belief and life are based upon these essentials of Jesus, he may believe the entire Christian dogma as built up by the Church. If they are not so based, he can believe them all, and be in no sense a Christian.

So, virile, high-purposed men are everywhere being gripped with the truth that Jesus taught no system, but that he taught a great spirit so to speak, a great motive in life, and that love is the word that encompasses it all. They are realising that Jesus taught that there is no such thing as a direct personal, or institutional salvation, that personal salvation comes always indirectly—it comes through service to others. Love is the propelling motive and love means action. They remember that Jesus called himself Truth not Habit. And the truth he realised he laboured diligently to lead all others into.

So we realise again that the religion and therefore the life that Jesus taught was both Godward and manward—Love God, love man; serve God by serving man. Love God—love the neighbour. Live in constant intimate

relations with God—live in constant friendly and helpful relations with the neighbour.

It was Tolstoy who said: "The trouble with this age of ours is that it has lost its sense of God." It was Jesus who, in the parable of the Good Samaritan, in terms that can never be misunderstood answered—Who is my neighbour? It does us good at times to recall the thought so uniquely expressed by Ernest Crosby:

"No one could tell me where my soul might be.
I searched for God but God eluded me.
I sought my brother out and found all three."

And this significant verse by Edwin Markham embodies a truth not unlike it:

"Who puts back into place a fallen bar,
Or flings a rock out of a travelled road,
His feet are moving toward the central star,
His name is whispered in the Gods' abode."

If there is one word that could be chosen as an epitome of Jesus' teachings it would be the word love. Even at the very close of his ministry he said to his disciples, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." And I suspect that when we know a little more than we know at the present time, when we are really ready to take Jesus' teachings

as he gave them to us, we will find that most of these complex problems before us will be solved through the media of this one word, *love*. Take our social problems; take our problem of employer and labourer; take our world military problem—the disgrace, we might say, of this supposedly civilized age; infuse into all our relations this real element of love and sympathy, and see how these problems will begin to solve themselves.

I suspect also that we will not have any solution of these and kindred problems in our generation, or the next generation, or still the next, and so on indefinitely, until we do finally have sense enough really to take this great fundamental of Jesus and build our own lives upon it, and infuse this great force, or this principle, into all of our personal and community relations, into all our national and international relations.

Were we realising this more fully, we wouldn't be witnessing to-day a return to the jungle methods, to the use of tooth and claw. The cave men broke in the skulls one of another because they didn't know there was a better way of living with neighbouring tribes. Savage tribes among us to-day occasionally do the same. Now and then a Christian nation has to send an expeditionary force to save them from their blind fury.

We have been witnessing the blinding hate, the fury, and the struggles of millions of men as they endeavour to break in one another's skulls, among the leading Christian nations of the world. Does any sane person pretend for a moment to say or to think, that if the Church *had* been true to the teachings of her Master, this would have been occurring to-day! No, she hasn't dared to be true to her Master. She has strayed after false Gods. She has followed the lead of early creed-makers and of ecclesiastics, instead of daring to do her own thinking, instead of daring to follow the teachings of the Master.

She has been first beguiled, and then bullied into the belief that the organisation is the thing, when the Master wouldn't give the snap of his finger for all the religious organisations in the world, *compared to the realisation and the exemplication of:* By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another; compared to: Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven; compared to: And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

But failing to grasp these, failing to realise the wonderful conservation that comes through the law of mutuality, nations have been piling up national debts, under which their people will stagger as the tax edict sounds out its eternal

Pay, Pay, Pay, for upwards of two hundred years to come. They have been laying waste and have been destroying untold millions of the results of men's and women's labour. They have endeavoured to kill, and they have succeeded in killing, the very flower of the young manhood of opposing nations; and in endeavouring to do this, they have had the very flower of their own young manhood killed off.

Desolation is brought to millions of homes; and millions of mothers stand in their stolid grief, realising that they have borne their sons —no, I will not hesitate to say it, for it is all too true—as "cannon fodder"—in the wild frenzy of organised murder that has not been of their own choosing, and in connection with which they have had no voice. And over, what has been gained? Nothing, not a solitary thing that could not have been gained through the application of ordinary horse-sense on the part of men meeting one another on the ground of mutual consideration and mutual respect. And through it all we realise the truth that revealed itself to the poet's vision:

"The robber is robbed by his riches;
The tyrant is dragged by his chains;
The schemer is snared by his cunning,
The slayer lies dead by the slain."

Men and whole nations have been hypnotised into the belief that they can gain more through the destructive law of conflict than through the conserving law of mutuality. They have been hypnotised into the belief that they must arm one against another, that nations must build long lines of forts along their frontiers to protect themselves against the aggressions of their neighbours. It is a mediæval idea, and strange to say, with all our enlightenment and advancement, it still persists in this twentieth century.

But it is false, false in that it is not necessarily so. There is a boundary-line over three thousand miles in extent, between the United States and Canada. Through the application of plain common sense, and through it the conserving of hundreds of millions of dollars, it has not been necessary through a hundred years to build a single fort or to plant a single cannon, along this vast boundary-line. Suspicion and mistrust have not been planted or engendered thereby.

True there are differences in peoples and in nations; but strong men, men of heart as well as of brains, respect differences, and even admire them. These do not lead to antagonism, unless in our blind stupidity or bigotry we allow them so to lead. Kipling, in that splendid poem regarding the East and the West, recognises this difference:

"Oh, East is East, and West is West,
And never the Twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently
At God's great Judgment Seat;"

He recognises at the same time, however, a law just as deep-seated and even more far-reaching:

"But there is neither East nor West,
Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face,
Tho' they come from the ends of the earth!"

And why has this great and destructive struggle come about? thoughtful men are asking everywhere. There are undoubtedly many contributory causes, but primarily the reasons are these: On account of inflated ambitions; on account of a lack of intelligent attention to their own affairs in government on the part of the people of the various nations; and on account of the failure of Christianity in that we have professed but have not lived the teachings of the Christ. I am sure we will find that these will bear analysis.

Hymns of hate and deeds of hate are the direct antithesis of the Christianism of the Christ. A lack of imagination, of clear thinking, and of high purpose on the part of us all

cannot be overlooked. A well-known minister —citizen of one of the nations in the war, in a large public gathering, said in substance some days ago, that the Church upon whom the guilt of the world rested, because it could have saved the world and did not, must prove that she does not think that her Master's principles are unpractical and dull, but are living and to be lived for. It is not for me to say how true the first position of this statement may be; there can be no question on the part of thinking men and women as to the truth of the latter part of his statement.

It is also probably true that the gigantic struggle over, with its enormous losses, and with its enormous debts encumbering the people for centuries to come, the people of the various nations will be so brought to their senses, as well as to a realisation of their rights and their duties, that it will be forever impossible for a group of twenty-two men to plunge the world into a period of such destructive savagery again. When all is over, and the ruin and the losses are contemplated, men will think as they have never thought before. The final judgment of men, even in those nations whose rulers have been most to blame, will be pretty nearly correct. They will place the blame where it belongs. It remains to be seen what portion of the blame they

will recognise themselves as responsible for.

A noted scientist and writer has recently said, "The most atrocious lie that was ever spoken by human lips, is concentrated into only five words: 'the divine right of kings,' with one exception in atrocity, 'the divine right of priests.'" Yes, and both of them are opposed to the teachings of the Christ. All too slowly they have been dying because the rank and file of men act through habit and inheritance, instead of through intelligent independent thinking. Nevertheless men *are* thinking, and from now on will be thinking more clearly and more concretely than ever before. And the more clearly they realise that the boldest advocates of the former are interested primarily in holding their authority and in perpetuating their line, and that the latter are interested primarily in clinging to their authority even in an age where they realise all too clearly that it has all but slipped from them, then the people will act in a manner that shows a greater degree of self-enlightenment—kindly but resolutely.

I would not minimise *the heroism and the self-sacrifice* of the millions of young men who with the most commendable feelings and promptings of patriotism have thrown themselves into the vortex. One thing, however, that will come home to all, is that the losses are

incalculable and atrocious because so unnecessary. But what are we, what is the world to gain from it? What is to be done? And this means what are we going to do to prevent our going on year after year and generation after generation, under the leadership of those who believe in the brute force of the savage, and that might makes right, rather than under the leadership of those who believe in the use of ordinary common sense, who believe in the spirit of mutual consideration and concession, in the relations of nations one with another.

The only thing that will make war to cease is the extension of the principle of brotherhood into the relations and the dealings of nations one with another, and the spirit of the Christ whereby every nation will be as eager to give justice as it is to demand justice.

All the peoples of the world are so intimately and so mutually related now, through travel, through commerce, and through many common interests, that co-operation through federation is now natural and imperative. A permanent World's Court, composed of representatives of every nation, upon some just and equitable principle of representation, must take form. To it all disputes between nations that cannot be settled among themselves, must be referred for final adjudication. The Allied Army of the Powers, which would mean but a fraction of

those now in existence, must be the police power that will enforce these decisions if there is shown a disposition on the part of any nation not to abide by them.

Then if one nation contracts too fully the inflated ego; if it makes unjust demands upon any smaller or weaker nation or seeks any unfair advantage, or advantage through any unfair methods in its dealings with any other nation or nations; or if it shows a chronic disposition to "run amuck" among nations, it can be dealt with in an orderly, a convincing, and an economical manner.

One nation or one group of nations will not have to be thrown then into the incalculable losses of war for self-protection, nor will the peace of the world whereby all nations suffer, be again disrupted. The world is so closely related now that the rights of neutral nations in times of international conflict are becoming matters of supreme importance.

We men of America on account of the unique position the nation occupies—not that our record is clear by any means, far from it—but it is unquestionably more clear than that of any other nation of anywhere near like importance in the world, should take a leading hand in bringing about the establishing of this International Court that is sure to come. The world is not only ready but pleading for it, and

the best minds and thought of every nation recognise the fact that it is now due.

America, by reason of her far security, has been in the position to develop unhindered, free from the biases and the centuries-old prejudices and suspicions and hatreds that have been the cause of so many discords, that have been the cause of so many antagonisms in many of the old-world countries. She looks with faith and trust and supreme good-will upon every nation. More than this, a new Nationalism has of late years been taking form here, which is gradually convincing the nations of the world that there is such a thing as a nation being genuinely interested in developing the resources and in helping to promote the highest welfare of other smaller and weaker nations. This is said not in a " holier than thou " fashion, but because it is a fact.

Nor have we been beguiled by the belief that still holds in some quarters, that *militarism* is conducive to the strength, the real safety, or prosperity of a nation. The almost incomprehensible losses, the unending horizons of blackened ruins of things that once were, the delusion of militarism and the belief that great armies help nations to prosperity, will now be subject to modification if not to radical change.

All intelligent people now recognise the fact

that ententes, alliances, and coalitions of every type, have proved themselves incapable of preserving peace. It is almost needless to say that they always will, because they are based upon mistrust and eventually upon militarism. The very basis of militarism is a disbelief in mutuality and co-operation, whose logical sequence is Federation. The Founder of Christendom taught love—it was his fundamental teaching—and from love arises neighbourliness, mutuality, co-operation; and for any nation, therefore, to base its whole structure upon militarism and call itself a Christian nation is indeed an anomaly.

It is now armed rivalry and suspicion on the one hand, or unarmed co-operation through the mighty conserving law of mutuality, on the other. Nations must now co-operate and federate or they must perish. He that takes the sword shall perish by the sword, is based upon an elemental law. It is as true of nations as it is of individuals.

With the blasting of their hopes of peace and of security through militarism, European nations—if not their rulers then their peoples—are now more ready to consider and to demand other means for peace and safety. Alliances through secret diplomacy, are likewise not to be depended upon, when it comes to the final test. It is also time to learn a great and now a

clearly demonstrated lesson from the past—that annexation of conquered territory or peoples without their consent, or expressed desire, can never be made successfully, that is, it can never be made to pay. No violation of elemental laws and no sins against human nature can ever be made to pay. They will in time be avenged. Chickens do come home to roost.

If some form of World Federation does not now speedily come about, then these millions of brave young men of all the involved nations, who have thrown themselves with such heroic abandon into the great conflict, will have died in vain, and the historian will have no choice but to record this period as the period of the Great Crime. We owe it to them, as well as to ourselves and to our children, to work unceasingly and with a dauntless determination for the extension of nationalism into internationalism, whereby a definite World Federation will begin speedily to take form. It waits for those nations of the clearest insight and the greatest moral courage to begin. Others will gradually and necessarily be drawn into it.

It requires no secret diplomacy, but honest, open, straightforward dealings as do all matters where the real welfare of the people is the primary object. Here is an accomplishment

worthy of the highest ability in statesmanship and diplomacy, as well as the highest ability in informing and in moulding public opinion throughout the nations. We will yet reach the period when it will be asked of nations similarly as of individuals—What profiteth it if a nation gain the whole world and lose its own soul?

Christian nations must give life to their Christianity. The Christ did not formulate doctrine; he revealed truth, and he showed us the Way in life that leads to peace and goodwill among men. And the truth that he taught —that we shall love our neighbours as ourselves, is just as essential for us to realise as that we shall love our God. It is only by such methods that the Kingdom of Heaven and its rule among men, can be made actual in this our world. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven, is our prayer. We forget that in human affairs God works entirely through human agencies—through human minds and hearts and wills. Millions of men and women pray this daily. When these millions of men and women realise that upon them devolves the duty, then we will more speedily begin to realise the Kingdom.

A mighty lot of thinking has been going on during the last decade, and a mighty lot of

thinking is going on to-day. The result is that Christianity is in a great transitional stage to-day. The vast numbers of earnest, thinking men and women among us, now freed from "authority," who are finding authority for themselves and are finding it in a direct study of Jesus' own life and teachings, are receiving from them such inspirations that they are coming into close grip with many of the agencies that have retarded the coming of the Kingdom here among men.

Take men of exceptional executive ability, of exceptional business ability, of exceptional mental acumen, inspire them, or rather let them be inspired and gripped by Jesus' two-fold message of love, which means the divinity of man and the rule of brotherhood among men, and wonderful changes will be soon in our midst. With the dying of great portions of the old beliefs, and with the time ripe for a great new onsweep of the Spirit, what cannot a few such men do along the lines of a revitalised Christianity, which means a revitalised Church, and a revitalised nation!

Let then a sufficient number of men in several of the leading nations be inspired sufficiently with the newly dawning thought, that a narrow scheming self-seeking and therefore unchristian nationalism must give way to internationalism, with its law of mutualism and its

cardinal principle of being as eager to give justice as to demand justice, and the slowly dawning World Federation becomes a thing of to-morrow. This is what we are beginning to witness on every hand to-day.

Strong and virile men in all ranks of life are catching the real spirit of the teachings of the Christ, they are being gripped by its beauty and its power, and they are asking: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

Said a well-known business man to a well-known churchman, by whose side he was sitting on a platform at a notable gathering some time ago: Bishop, I take it that you too are more interested in men than in things. This same Henry Ford, in the prime of life, obedient to the spirit within, proceeds to Christianise a great business. Other men take note and follow his example. Other men of great business abilities independently do the same. They thereby move out of the ranks of the commonplace, into the ranks of the elect. This more inclusive life expands in its beauty and its power to a degree that they had not dreamed before.

It is but another step to use the exceptional executive and business abilities in the service of one's community, his city, the state, or the nation through the avenues of political action or otherwise, instead of using them entirely for

the piling up of great fortunes, which beyond a certain point may be of questionable value to one's descendants, and sometimes a positive harm.

Men and women of exceptional wealth are being moved by and are being gripped by this same spirit—already a great change has come. Never again in our day, can it be said that the wealthy are intent primarily upon their own aggrandisement and pleasures, that they are careless of the welfare of others. The recent response to the world's needs both in money and in personal service, is of itself a denial of that. They too are moving out into the ranks of the elect, with lives that are expanding in beauty through the joy of action in service. True there are some who are still dead, who show by their lives and their habits that they are but little above the brute creation—but they are exceptions.

Increasing numbers of University men are grasping this simpler but this truer content of the Christian religion, and with their trained minds and with their broader knowledge of things and of events, they are making their activities more keenly felt in various realms of human action, including that essential field in good government—the field of practical politics.

Labour and Capital, employer and employee,

are recognising as never before the power of this law of mutuality in their agreements, in adjusting their differences, and in all their relations. The "working agreement," and the deep-seated realisation of the fact that the interests of the one are the interests of the other, are leading them away from the days of continual conflict and brow-beating, with their enormous losses both to themselves and to the public, into a far more common-sense and conserving type of relationship.

Men who are awake to the real message and therefore the real religion of the Christ, are being drawn into closer touch and work with our prisons. The old idea of revenge and of punishment, is giving way to the idea of uplift and reformation through education, so that when a man has served his time, he is returned to society not as an outlaw, as the great bulk of men have been; but he is returned a changed and a wiser man, with the ability and with the disposition still to do a man's work in the world. Under this better and wiser influence, instead of being treated as brutes, solely to be caged and curbed, they are being treated as human beings, men with souls, men with the divine spark, ready to come forth under the influence of the right environment and under the influence of the Spirit of the Christ as it becomes incarnate and manifests itself in those

under whose influence and whose direction they are.

A continually clearer realisation of the fact is taking place on the part of long-headed men and women, that we are to blame, that society is to blame in the great majority of cases, for the passing of men and women within prison walls. It was Victor Hugo who said that bad conditions make bad men; therefore let us change the conditions.

A few days ago when at Sing Sing Prison, I was being shown about by a trusty who is serving a life sentence. He is between twenty-five and thirty years of age. Whiskey, he said, was the cause of his crime and the cause of his sentence. While under the influence of drink, a quarrel with his companion ensued and he pulled a gun and shot him.

I inquired of his family. He has a mother and a sister living. His sister is widowed and has a family of children. They live together. The mother and daughter take in washing and go out to do cleaning. He is paid two cents a day for his labour, the same as are all the other inmates in the prison. Under a saner type of management, our stupid folly of sending a man to prison, and of allowing his family, if he has a family, to struggle along without any means of support, or if unable to meet successfully the changed conditions, making them

become public charges, will be done away with. Every man in prison will be paid a decent wage for his labour, to be returned to his family—in practically every case the greatest sufferers.

It happened to be an afternoon when the Prisoners' Court was in session—the court composed entirely of inmates—under the direction of the Welfare League that has been instituted under the régime of Warden Osborne and that has had such a wonderful influence upon the prison discipline and life. Among those who were before the court for infraction of prison rules, was one of the few older men in the prison. During his statement he said that he had been tried and sentenced for a crime that he had committed, of which he had no knowledge, absolutely no memory of whatever.

I cite these two cases for a purpose. As a people, and as a government, we license, we allow to be manufactured and to be sold, deadly crime-inciting, poverty-producing drinks that serve no good purposes whatever, but that sow the seeds of moral, mental, and physical deterioration, the seeds of poverty and of crime throughout the land. The national government and the local community derive a profit out of the business. Courts of justice taking care of the criminals that are made, the continual grist of defectives and paupers to be

cared for, more than balance in the end the sums that are derived in profits, to say nothing of *the desolation* that is brought to hundreds of thousands of homes annually, the never-ending lines of men that are sent to our jails and penitentiaries, and the other numbers that the state puts to death, for crimes committed under the influence of that which we permit and legalise.

Is it any wonder that as a Christian people we are awakening from our lethargy, and are demanding that the crime and poverty producing stuff which serves no good purpose whatever, be driven from the country? I am saying nothing of those light healthy wines and beers, manufactured under strict regulations as to purity, such as are used by all classes of people in France, in Germany, in Italy and in other countries, in their homes and on their tables. I am speaking of the deadly whiskies and alcohols, and of the legalising of public drinking-places by the thousands where *these* can be bought and drunk—the saloons that become the meeting-places of gamblers and crooks and political grafters, and of those who make it a business by every conceivable method to lure young men and women away from the paths of straight and decent living.

If we profess to be a Christian civilisation, two minutes of clear thinking will show any

man that this practice that we permit and legalise is the very antithesis of Christian life and practice. We will realise that upon us rest the crimes that are committed and the poverty and degradation that is brought annually to hundreds of thousands of homes—"our neighbours," and we will speak with a voice of determination to our government both national and local.

In so doing, however, we will be speaking to ourselves, for we can never get away from the fact that in a democratic form of government, we, so to speak, are the government, that is, upon the individual citizen as a voter and as one whose duty it is to take a direct personal interest and activity in all public matters, depends every policy and every act of government. When we are awake to our duties as well as our privileges as citizens, we will realise the fact that whenever we have any conditions or any state of affairs in government, national, state, or local, that are not what they should be, it is because the average citizen, you and I, do not give the intelligent consideration, the time, and the attention to matters of government, to practical politics, that we should give them.

And so in our present-day life, as men grasp the real content of the Master's teachings, they are gripped with a greater intelligence and pur-

pose that pushes them along lines of action that those without this deeper perception and realisation do not have. A genuine love for the neighbour, a deeper realisation that service is the evidence of that love, a wider extension of the law of mutuality, combine to give evidence of the fact that the Christianity of the Christ is actually alive and is being lived here among men.

XII

THE POWER, THE BEAUTY, AND THE SUSTAINING PEACE THAT THE NEW MEANING OF CHRISTIANITY IMPARTS TO LIFE

The historian of the future will probably point to our time as a time when there came a great change in Christianity. For then men became keen enough to realise that formulated Christianity was something different from the revelation and the teachings of the Christ. Then men began to stop discussing and also discoursing upon the Divinity of Jesus, and realised that the supreme thing that Jesus taught was the Divinity of man. If the divinity of man, then, not the fall of man and his inherent sinfulness and degradation, and thereby one of the chief foundation pillars of ecclesiasticism dropped and crumbled, and with it came a vitality and a power that made it take a great leap forward, taking with it great numbers of earnest, thinking men and women who were rapidly becoming alienated, and drawing to it vast numbers who had never been impressed or interested.

It was a time, they will say, when men began fully to realise that religion is not something, as a glove, to put on on Sundays and on special occasions, but that it is an inner spirit that permeates the innermost springs of life, and that becomes a guiding and a moulding force in connection with the minutest affairs of the daily life, and in every relation of a man with his neighbour.

The time has passed when one need apologise for comparing organised Christianity as it is to-day with the real teachings, and spirit, and life of the Christ, or in pointing to its weaknesses or its failures. Not only outsiders, but its most genuine adherents realise these all too keenly. This is one of the reasons that it has lost its hold—both Protestant and Catholic—upon the great masses of its people. Another reason is that truth has a persistent way of obtruding itself, and of pushing facts up to the surface. A knowledge of early beginnings in connection with dogmatic and ecclesiastical Christianity, is relieving increasing numbers from the superstitious reverence for it as an organisation that many once had.

The real content of Christianity, if it had gone out to the world as Jesus gave it so simply and so clearly on those clear Judæan hills, would have been a force that before this would have swept the world. There is nothing more

needed at the present time, than the rekindling of a deep spiritual consciousness, based upon the real content of Jesus' teachings, in the individual mind and life, so that it may permeate and determine all conditions in our collective life and in society as a whole. The real spiritual elements that have so fully faded into the background in Christianity must be recovered, for they constitute its very life.

Christianity must be a growing thing. It must abide by the same law of God that is eternal and that can never be evaded—it must develop and grow, or it must stagnate and perish.

"It is the hour of man: New purposes,
Broad-shouldered, press against the world's
slow gate;
And voices from the vast eternities
Still preach the soul's austere apostolate.

"Always there will be vision for the heart,
The press of endless passion; every goal
A traveller's tavern, whence he must depart
On new divine adventures of the soul."

We hear men talk already of the formulating of a new Religion. In a sense they are right. But they must realise that the human mind knows nothing yet that is superior to the funda-

mentals of the Christ; and that any new formulation of religion, and for probably a long time to come, must centre upon these fundamentals.

The real content of Christianity is to my mind superior to any other form of religion that we know. But some forms of ecclesiastical Christianity are not only no better but in many respects inferior. The sole test of any religion is in its influences, its effects upon the lives, the characters, and therefore the acts and the practices of those who are its followers. There are forms of Christianity that do not measure up well by this test. We must not be too sanguine nor too cock-sure regarding the superiority or even the permanency of Christianity.

The greater our study of Comparative Religions, the more our eyes are opened to the valuable contents of some other religions. Moreover as we gain a wider acquaintanceship with some of their adherents, the more we are impressed with the splendid lives and characters that have been developed and shaped by them.

It is, we must conclude, only as Christianity *is lived* that gives it its real superiority. And this is the real significance of this great reconstruction process that is on in Christendom today. Men are getting their religion through their own interpretations by a direct contact

with the Master and by a direct study of his matchless teachings. The more they are doing this, the more profoundly dissatisfied are they with dogmatic Christianity and with its methods.

The more however they sit at his feet, the more they are inspired and the more they are determined to make his way their way. They get the vision; they go forth to its call. And so Christianity is functioning in an increasing degree through the minds and the hearts and therefore the lives of men and women who are doing a valiant work in making the Kingdom of heaven the kingdom of this earth.

It is the most hopeful sign of an awakened Christianity and an advancing Christian civilisation that we of to-day have ever known. It is making itself felt inside and outside of our churches. That this is being already widely recognised is well illustrated by the following significant words:* "The new appraisal of Christ introduces us to a man of virile, ener-

* From an article entitled "Christ in the Twentieth Century," by R. L. Jackson, in "The Biblical World—A Journal of the Awakening Church," The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois. ("The Biblical World" is a splendid periodical for all who are desirous of keeping in closer touch with the thought and with the agencies that are producing a more vital religion and a truer type of Christianity.)

getic character and powerful, arresting personality. We are face to face with a dynamic, aggressive individual. Back of his soaring ideality is an executive energy which ensures his dreams eventual realisation in actual fact. He handles the stuff of life with startling originality and amazing artistry. He masters and moves men with consummate ease.

"Now with the coming of the new conception of Christ there has also come a new conception of Christian discipleship and a new type of man to give it realisation . . . taking up one's cross and following Christ means getting underneath the burdens of the world and bravely bearing them to the end. It means heroic endurance of all that is involved in the task of righting the wrongs of the wretched and woeful. This is the meaning of following Christ in the modern age, and there are increasing numbers of strong, assertive men to whom it is potently appealing. Men with red blood, iron wills, keen, live minds, used to doing big, vital things in the visible world, are being gripped by the new conception of Christian discipleship, and organised Christianity is witnessing a steady influx of them into its ranks. . . . There is a deal of pretentious talk in defence of the truth on the part of many religionists, but that which is so valorously defended is not the truth but a certain body of

opinions whose antiquity is a guaranty to those holding them of their correspondence with reality. Traditional opinion, transmitted doctrine, are their ideas of truth. Far different is the conception of the true champions of truth. Truth to them is an expression of fact—it is an ever-augmenting and expanding value, advancing with the advancing intelligence and character of the race. . . . As men's experience of the living God becomes richer and clearer, religion adds its contribution to the value of truth. What does all this involve but an open receptive mind? Not a continual harking back to the past but a continual turning toward the future. . . .

"Finally the twentieth-century Christ is enlisting the services of strong, aggressive men in behalf of the higher spiritual life. We are witnessing the amazing spectacle of men known for their adamantine determination and dynamic forcefulness in the business and professional world becoming earnest, unremitting advocates of the life of the spirit. The spiritual life has found a vantage ground in lives that are being vigorously lived at the very focus of the world's passionful life. . . . It is a call to them to apply their strength and courage to those high spiritual ends apart from which human life is devoid of transcendent meaning; and their answer is the Yes of a life conse-

crated to the service of God and their fellowmen."

It is the things of the mind and the spirit that determine the worth of a man's or a woman's life, and that determine also the degree of his or her real happiness. The satisfying and abiding pleasures of life do not come from complexing life but rather from simplifying it, which enables one to live it more harmoniously from the centre, as every law of nature and every moral law demands that it must be lived, rather than too fully in the mere externalities.

No, life is much more interesting than mere fences or fields or boards or bricks or railroad ties or stocks or bonds, or even bonnets or hats; and they who do not realise this are among the most deluded people in the world—however enormous they may wax in the size of any of the former.

Again there is that very large number of people, and of all ages, who are cheating themselves of the genuine pleasures of life through their excesses in the pursuit of pleasure. It must never be the abuse of anything good in itself—the use of all natural gifts, functions, and powers, but not the excessive use; neither asceticism on the one hand nor license or perverted use on the other. True enjoyment lies always along that royal middle ground—the

use of all, but with the imperial hand of mastery upon all. Otherwise there are always heavy penalties to pay. The sharp edge of appetite is always an essential to true enjoyment; when jaded or full to repletion the keen sense of enjoyment is gone.

Happiness is the natural and the normal; it is one of the concomitants of righteousness, which means merely living in the right relations with the laws of our being and the laws of the universe about us. No clear-thinking man or woman can be an apostle of despair. Let us know that the best things are ours in proportion as we order our lives in accordance with the higher laws of our being. And so pleasure comes not by seeking for it directly and regularly—it is the outcome, the natural outcome, of a well-regulated, an alert, progressive, unself-centred and useful life.

It cannot be otherwise than well that we find the Kingdom while here; that we realise the reign of the Spirit, which is the reign of God in the mind and heart and life. It serves us here; and it may serve us better than we know, when we are through here, and when what lies beyond awaits us. With life thus under the Divine rule we are able better to preserve the true proportions of life. It brings with it inevitably a change of values.

There will be problems—there will always be problems. As desire, however, leads us to subordinate all things to this Kingdom of the Divine rule, and as will keeps us true to that desire, there come continually clearer perceptions through the leadings of the Spirit—the Holy Spirit of which the Master spoke—through which new insights and powers are awakened within; and there comes a fortitude of the soul that enables us to meet with calmness, and effectively to deal with each problem, as it comes.

There is a help in connection with the *way* that the Master has shown us, that is of inestimable value and that we could use to far better advantage than we do use it. It is the method or the practice that he made use of so frequently himself, whereby he was enabled to sense and to find the *way,* which, when he found, he revealed to us. So many times, we are told, he *went alone* into the mountain to pray—to commune with the Father. It is these quiet times alone, in communion with our Source, the Reality of our being, in communion with the Father—my Father and your Father—as Jesus taught us, which constitute effective and valuable prayer. Surely this is what he meant when he said: But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is

in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

It is thus that the deeper perceptions of the mind and spirit are awakened and developed. It is the greatest privilege or gift that we humans have. "In every man," said Tolstoy, "there is the divine spark, the Spirit of God. Prayer consists in calling forth in oneself the divine element . . . in evoking in oneself the divine part of one's soul by throwing oneself into it, entering it by communion with Him of whom It is a part. And such prayer is not an idle sentimentality and excitement such as is produced by public prayer, with the accompanying singing, images, illuminations, and exhortations—but is always a help to life, reforming and directing it."

A great secret of life, therefore, is to go daily into the mountain to pray, and then to go down to do each day aman's or a woman's work in the world. As is revealed to us, so we can reveal. As we receive, we can give, *and we must give*—thus we serve. It is in this way that life flows along in a satisfactory and a useful manner here, and we are ready in a natural and a normal way for whatever lies beyond. Thus do all things work together for good for those who love the Good—and the way of the Christ is the highest that we know.

The great Intelligence of the universe, working through the eternal Law of cause and effect, so universal and so accurate, the unbounding and the everlasting love of the Father as revealed by the Christ, make it impossible for us to think that this life that we are in here, can be other than one phase, one little day or period, of the eternal life that we are living.

Character is cumulative, experience is cumulative. As we sow, so surely shall we reap. Spirit, which is Divine Being, is eternal. Forms change, but the Life abides—and no man liveth unto himself alone. God is Spirit and God is Love. To know God is to live in the spirit, and by service to show forth his love. Therefore

"Let your attitude to all men be one of continual embrace.
So do, and death will not know where to find you."

Yes, or again it may come as a kind old mother, eternally longing for our highest good. And when the fitful fever calms, and *the moment* comes, gently she will push open the door, saying as she enters: Put off the old coat now, and come. Instinctively you clutch to retain it. No, she says, you leave it, you leave every-

thing—you go. I will help put it off. Don't fear. It is merely a change—you are the same. There! arise and come. Yonder a little group is waiting for you; some have been waiting long—so very long, they say. They have many things to show you. See, they come. Stay, I go.

And may it be that the Master will be passing, and stopping will say: "I told you many things, but the best I have not told you for you could not understand. You believed my words and you have lived my truths. But my, how you did stumble and fall at times! But every time you got up and went on, true to the Way—that is the only thing that really counts. You have done well; you have done better than I expected—come, our Father awaits you. And you believed me, didn't you, when I said: By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another."

Sometimes the poet's vision perceives truths and facts far in advance of our more slow-moving intellect, with its methods of deduction and experimentation. It has so happened many times. It was Francis Thompson, who thus made the Father speak:

"All which I took from thee I did but take,
Not for thy harms,

But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.
All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:
Rise, clasp My hand, and come!"